

الْقُرْآنُ الْكَرِيمُ
وَكَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعَلْيَا

THE
ASCENDANT QUR'AN
Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture

VOLUME 12
Al-An'ām:33–165



Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Āṣī



In the Name of Allah,
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful

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ASCENDANT QUR'AN

Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture

VOLUME 12
Al-An'ām:33–165

Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT
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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle.
O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must]
send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsīr*, we beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥīn*, the *ṣiddīqīn*, the *shuhadā'*, and the *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsīr* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought

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Publisher's Foreword

Sūrah al-An'ām was revealed in the last year of the prophetic mission in Makkah. It addresses a number of issues confronting the noble Messenger (ﷺ) at the time. For 12 years, he had been delivering the divine message to the people of Makkah but apart from a small number, the vast majority rejected it. Over time, such rejection assumed the form of derision and outright hostility led by the powerful clan chiefs. Seven years earlier, in the fifth year of the prophetic mission, a group of about 100 Muslim men and women were forced to seek refuge in Abyssinia to escape persecution. While the noble Messenger and his small group of followers endured the persecution inflicted by the Makkan elites, life had become progressively intolerable, made worse by the loss of two of the noble Messenger's closest supporters: his kind and caring uncle Abū Ṭālib, and his beloved wife for 25 years, Khadijah. This loss left the Messenger of Allah extremely exposed.

Despite familiarity with his impeccable character — the Makkans had conferred the titles of *al-ṣādiq* and *al-amīn* upon him before the start of revelation — the stone-hearted *mushriks* refused to accept his message. This naturally caused him deep anguish. It

was in these circumstances that Allah (ﷻ) sent consoling words to His beloved Messenger (ﷺ).

This *sūrah* deals with this as well as a number of other themes that can be summarized as follows:

1. Divine words of consolation are delivered to the noble Messenger, reassuring him that earlier prophets had faced similar rejection from their people.
2. The prophets' responsibility is to communicate the message revealed to them from on high; they are not responsible for people's acceptance or rejection. Human beings are free to accept or reject the divine message (18:29) and thus face the consequences of their choice.
3. In response to the *mushriks*' demands that the Prophet (ﷺ) perform miracles, Allah initiates a paradigm shift through the agency of this Scripture (the Qur'an) and this final Messenger — that the history of physical and material miracles would now be replaced by a dynamic commitment to Allah (ﷻ) built upon a mental relationship of understanding, reasoning, and thinking; and miracles, should they be needed, would only fuel the headway of this Islamic momentum. Besides, were they to reflect on the matter just a little bit, they would have seen that the Qur'an itself is a living and permanent miracle the like of which had not been produced before.
4. The *mushriks* were questioning why Allah's punishment did not immediately befall them for their refusal to accept the divine message. In the first instance, Allah's mercy gives even such people myriad chances to reconsider their choices. Secondly, Allah's timescale is not contingent upon human priorities and the futile resolution of doubts entertained by those who never intended to accede to His authority. And so, Allah (ﷻ) takes their argument to its logical conclusion: if divine wrath were to overtake them (6:63–65), who could save them?
5. The story of Ibrāhīm's struggle for guidance is narrated. This is to remind the *mushriks* — who claimed to follow the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm and inherited the custodianship of the Ka'bah — that it was Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) who used his God-given faculty of

reasoning to affirm that there can be no divinity and authority other than Allah (ﷻ), and hence his secure commitment (*īmān*) was a natural outcome of that process. The point of the story, therefore, was to encourage the Arabians of Makkah (and all others after them) to exercise the same faculty with the *āyāt* of the Qur'an and reach the same conclusion as Ibrāhīm, thereby confirming his legacy through the agency of Muhammad and truly belonging to Ibrāhīm's *dīn* as they had been claiming all along. The fact that they rejected Muhammad (ﷺ) proves they were not keen on thinking, which is the case with all despotic and illegitimate temporal authorities and why they need force to achieve their ends and retain power.

6. Allah (ﷻ) reminds them that it is He who causes the rain to fall from the sky, who makes the grain sprout from the earth, and who enables the trees to bear fruits of different kinds. These are among His favors to all people yet the ungrateful ones refuse to take heed.
7. Also covered is the proscription against the consumption of animal flesh that has been sacrificed under conditions where the consciousness and recognition of Allah is not paramount (6:121). The *sūrah* goes on to reject the *jāhili* practices of the *mushriks* pertaining to the allocation of animal offerings to their deities and the misallocation of such offerings to certain members of their own society. Going forward in time, these discriminatory practices would be decommissioned, and Allah (ﷻ) would be relied upon to determine what is and what is not fit for the consumption of all human beings regardless of class, status, gender, race, and the like,

Say [O Prophet], “In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine — for that, behold, is loathsome — or a sinful offering over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked...” (6:145).

In the sequence of revelation of the *sūrah*s, this is the first time that we encounter the issue of meat that is either permissible or forbidden for man to consume. Readers familiar with the Qur'an would know that the question of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* meat has also been highlighted in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5:3). While placed before *Sūrah al-An'ām* in the noble Qur'an, *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* was revealed in Madinah in the final year of the noble Messenger's life on earth, about 10–11 years after *al-An'ām* was sent down..

Since Allah (ﷻ) is our Creator, He knows what is beneficial and what is harmful for us. Thus, He has clarified these issues to enable us to eat wholesome food that promotes health, which in and of itself is essential for us to effectively handle the weightier responsibilities of human existence on earth. Today, however, Muslims, and indeed the whole of humanity, are confronted by other challenges: genetically modified foods and animals injected with hormones and antibiotics, custom “manufactured” (not grown) for an instant-gratification culture that tries to arrest its gluttony with prescription drugs and organ-ectomies. The negative effects of such practices, motivated by greed and profit, have become apparent in the form of “diseases of modernity,” such as different types of cancers, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, attention deficit disorder, macular degeneration, and on and on. When humans abandon Allah's laws, they fall to the lowest of depths and dismiss the harm they cause to themselves.

In his monumental *tafsīr*, *The Ascendant Qur'an: Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture*, Imam Muḥammad al-Āṣī guides us through these intricacies and alerts us to the dangers of human-tampered foods and meats. It is his discussion of such vital issues that makes this *tafsīr* unique. The *mufasssirs* of earlier *tafsīrs* had not confronted the issues of genetically modified foods or hormone- and antibiotic-injected animals, as such practices — and the human “gods” who manage them — were either nonexistent or not widespread at the time.

The editor of this volume, as all earlier volumes of the *tafsīr* so far, Afeef Khan, has done an admirable job in ensuring the smooth reading of the text. Copious endnotes and references are also avail-

able to assist the more enterprising readers to delve deeper into the subject matter. A number of brothers, among them Imran Khan, Redzuan Shaw, and Hassam Munir have helped in different stages of this *tafsīr* either by proofreading or in preparing the indices. We are grateful to them all for their selfless help and dedication.

We are also grateful to all those who have helped in other ways in getting us this far with a project of monumental proportions. May Allah (ﷻ) reward them for their help and support, *āmin*. We are confident that this *tafsīr* will occupy an honored place in the massive compendium of *tafsīr* literature and will be of benefit to Muslims as well as sincere non-Muslims seeking the truth and understanding of the divine message. An electronic version of this twelfth volume is available for reading, or downloading from the ICIT digital library (www.icit-digital.org). Hard copies can of course be obtained directly from ICIT and Crescent International, or from various online retailers.

Zafar Bangash

Director, Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT)

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

al-Muḥarram 17, 1439AH (10-8-2017CE)

List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a largely English-speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



subhānahu wa-ta'ālā (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allāh*, etc.



'alayhi al-salām (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



'alayhim al-salām (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



'alayhā al-salām (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



'alayhimā al-salām (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.

Transliteration Chart

Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□	u	□آ	ā	□ئى	ay
□	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fá
ف□	fu	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fay
ف□	fi	فُؤ	fū	فُؤ	faw
		فِئى	fī		

Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□	an	□ى	ayy	□و	aww
□ى	an	□و	ūw	ف	ff
□	un	□ى	īy (medial)	ش	shsh
□	in	□ى	ī (final)	ر	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَآ	fan	فَئى	fayy	فَؤ	faww
فِئى	fan	فُؤ	fūw	ف	ff
ف□	fun	فِئى	fīy (medial)	ش	shsh
ف□	fin	فِئى	fī (final)	ر	rr

6

Sūrah al-An‘ām, Part 2

The Cattle

The *āyāt* in this part of *Sūrah al-An‘ām* begin with comforting Rasūl-Allāh and giving him solace. The mental picture here is one of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) under pressure, as his people were speaking out against him publicly, refusing to acknowledge him, and accusing him of lies and misdemeanors. In point of fact, however, he had a reputation in that Arabian society of being the most truthful and honest among them. Nonetheless, despite their equity with his impeccable character, they were unable to bring themselves to acquiesce to Allah (ﷻ); objecting to His higher authority, they simply could not commit themselves to Him and bear His covenant. In a functional sense, their rejection of Allah (ﷻ) meant they had to turn accusatory against Muhammad. And so, in these *āyāt*, Allah is reassuring Muhammad (ﷺ) through the experience of his prophetic brothers who had endured the same accusations and vilifications. They, too, were objects of social scorn and contempt;

and they, too, had to persevere through those difficult circumstances with patience and fortitude. In all those cases of prophetic engagement with wayward social orders, the final outcome was Allah (ﷻ) coming to the rescue. He eventually turned the tide and brought about the demise of those social forces that were hell-bent on scuttling the efforts and consistent mission of these prophets. All this was done and accomplished according to Allah's (ﷻ) social laws, which cannot be subverted or altered.

After His consolation and reassurance, Allah turns to Muhammad (ﷺ) and discloses the towering fact about publicizing His message — that it moves and progresses in conformity with Allah's (ﷻ) social laws (*sunan*). The only obligation of prophets and those filling in for them as *dā'īs* and *muballighs* is their communicating the words and Will of Allah (ﷻ). Following that, it is this Will that begins to take its course. It is expressed, gradually and momentously, through the commitment of human beings to His scripture and the *sunnah* of His messengers.

The interaction between the bearers and deniers of scripture will always have a dynamic in which the power pendulum has swung toward the deniers, and hence the bearers may be confidence-challenged, at least in the beginning. Therefore, within the course of this dynamic, committed Muslims cannot afford to think that things are going too slow, that no progress is being made, that something is desperately lacking, or that something else outside of this heavenly program is required. Above all, the Prophet (ﷺ) himself shall not be thinking in these terms. Sometimes things will appear to be stuck or that the people of God have reached an impasse. At this time there will be suggestions, prompting, and offers to change direction, to dilute the message, or to consider other “options.” Coming from people who are primed with establishment-approved mechanisms to redress grievances, none of these “validated” alternatives should be considered. The message of Allah (ﷻ) is meant for people who are conscious and conscientious — whose hearts are alive and responsive — not for those who are spent or jaded at heart, who have given no life or vitality to their moral sense, their sense of right and wrong. Unfortunately, those who are

heart-dead will continue in that stupor, even passing on that way. Such people can only be rescued when Allah's (ﷻ) decree softens their hearts, enabling them to respond to his delivering messages.

In addition to the outright doubters, there were those *mushriks* who tried to rationalize their doubt by asking the Prophet (ﷺ) to perform miracles, as they had heard of ancient prophets doing. But it is Allah's (ﷻ) will that this final Scripture be one that does not solicit the acceptance of man through the medium of miracles, as was the case in times past. And if such humans have been so blinded by their own arrogance and exaggerated sense of self-importance to see the miracle of the Qur'an in and of itself, then they are advised to let this towering self-importance produce its own miracles. In this vein, it cannot be appropriate for conscientious Muslims to demand miracles from Allah (ﷻ) so that some recalcitrant human beings can see a light they are willfully unreceptive to. Worthy of their commitment and subordination to Allah is their struggling in His cause, doing their share while leaving the "acceptance or rejection" part of this *risālah* to Allah, who created humans, knows their nature better than anyone else, and is able to apply His social laws or suspend them as He, and only He, commands by decree.

All Prophets Have Endured Alienation

- (6:33) Well do We know that what such people say grieves you indeed: yet, behold, it is not you to whom they give the lie, but Allah’s [power] messages do these evildoers deny.
- (6:34) And, indeed, [even] before your time have apostles been given the lie, and they endured with patience all those charges of falsehood, and all the hurt done to them, until reinforcement came to them from Us: for there is no power that could alter [the outcome of] Allah’s promises. And some of the histories of those apostles has already come within your awareness.
- (6:35) And if it distresses you that those who deny the truth turn their backs on you — why, then, if you are able to go down deep into the earth or to ascend a ladder unto heaven in order to bring them a [yet more convincing] message, [do so]; but [remember that] had Allah so willed, He would indeed have gathered them upon [His] guidance. Do not, therefore, allow yourself to ignore [Allah’s ways].
- (6:36) Only those who listen [with their hearts] can respond to a call; and as for the dead [of heart], Allah [alone] can raise them from the dead, whereupon unto Him they shall return.
- (6:37) And they say, “Why has no miraculous sign been bestowed on him from on high by his Sustainer?” Say, “Behold, Allah has the power to bestow any sign from on high.” Yet most human beings are unaware of this —
- (6:38) Although there is no beast walking on earth and no bird flying on its two wings that is not [Allah’s] creature like yourselves: no single thing have We neglected in Our decree. And once again: unto their Sustainer shall they [all] be gathered.
- (6:39) And those who give the lie to Our messages [of power] are deaf and dumb, in darkness deep. Whomever Allah wills, He lets go astray; and whomever He wills, He places upon a straight way (al-An‘ām:33–39).

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْرُنَكُ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ
 الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
 فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كَذَّبُوا وَأُودُوا حَتَّىٰ أَنَّهُمْ نَصَرْنَا وَلَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ
 وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَبِيِّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِنْ كَانَ كَبْرٌ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ
 فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ
 بِآيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ
 ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ فَادْرَأْهُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ
 آيَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَيْرٍ
 يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمٌّ أَمْثَالِكُمْ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ
 رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُؤُوبٌ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
 مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأِ يُجْعَلْهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

The *mushriks* in the Arabian society, the most hostile toward Muhammad (ﷺ), knew very well that if there was one person who would not lie, it was him. Even their elites could not doubt Muhammad's honesty and integrity. He spent a lifetime among them, not lying to them once about anything. Therefore, when the

Qur'an came through his agency, its words of substance notwithstanding, there was no way they could rebut or disprove it. They knew that it was impossible for the Qur'an to be the work of a human; a step lower, they knew that no human being could compose something even remotely similar to the Qur'an.

With all that, they still refused to acknowledge in public their affirmation of Allah (ﷻ), His venerable Prophet (ﷺ), and the sublime Qur'an. They declined this new *dīn*. Thus, they did not stand in opposition to the Prophet because they believed him to be lying; rather, they turned against him because his standing among them on the one hand and the substance and subject matter of the Qur'an on the other hand were a threat to their influence and status. For this reason they decided to oppose him and the message he brought to them, that is, to remain the *mushriks* they were.

“Extensively do We know that what such people [*mushriks*] say truly grieves you...” The enduring pain of rejection and animosity that accompanies one's emotional resignation to Allah (ﷻ) solicits this response from the ultimate Supporter. People of peerless character and commitment cannot help but feel at times worried, anxious, or burdened that other people, indeed society itself, are brusquely confronting them for no other reason than their carrying out their God-given responsibility. This type of psychological encumbrance cannot and should not weigh down on prophets and their followers. Other *āyāt* in the Qur'an say as much,

And be not aggrieved by their statement; in fact all glory is Allah's — He is all-hearing, all-knowing (10:65);

Thus, be not saddened by their verbalization; certainly We know what they conceal and what they divulge (36:76).

The Prophet (ﷺ) was instructed from on high not to be disheartened, demoralized, or dismayed because of their lack or absence of *īmān*. The same consolation is to be found in *Sūrah*s *al-Hijr* (15:88), *al-Nahl* (16:127), and *al-Naml* (27:70). The *mushriks*' inner voices

of conscience, which they tried very hard to suppress, knew Muhammad was neither lying, nor transferring any lies from Allah (ﷻ). They knew this because they were the ones who gave him the appellation *al-ṣādiq al-amīn* (the truthful and the trustworthy), having never heard him lie. Despite the extent of their experience with him, they nonetheless rejected the *āyāt* from Allah (ﷻ) that expressed the truth about him. The media of that primitive society, even then a tool of the ruling class, declined to give any quarters to Muhammad, in the same way that Mūsá’s (ﷺ) people, who also had problems with revelation, rejected him,

And they [the people of Moses] controverted it [Allah’s disclosures] while their inner selves knew it to be right; [they did that] as an act of abuse and arrogance: and behold what happened in the end to those spreaders of corruption!” (27:14).

This deceitful behavior comes from those who publicly deny their hearts’ certainty or who affirm what their hearts deny. It becomes difficult for normal and average human beings to deal with individuals, especially influential ones, who declare the truth to be false, even as their hearts vouch for the opposite.

It has been reported that Abū Jahl said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “We do not find fault with you [Muhammad]; we find fault with what you are preaching.”²⁷³ The *āyah*, “**But Allah’s power manifestations do these evildoers contravene...**” was revealed in response to this kind of social attitude. Another incident sheds more light on the fact that the elite of Makkah were well acquainted with Muhammad’s (ﷺ) genuineness,

The Prophet came across Abū Jahl, who greeted him. Seeing this happen, another man asked Abū Jahl, “Do I see you greeting this *ṣābi*’ (deserter)?” He [Abū Jahl] replied, “By Allah, I know he is a prophet, but when is it that we were to be the followers of the descendants of ‘Abd Manāf’?”²⁷⁴

Hence, **“It is not you who they are accusing of lies, but rather the evildoers are opposed to the power presence of Allah.”** While attuned to Muhammad’s (ﷺ) moral quality, they still refused to affirm Allah’s (ﷻ) legal authority.

All of this ought to lead to the conclusion that there is a divine social law (*sunnah*) at work. The committed Muslims, as disciples of the Prophet (ﷺ), will have to learn this by thinking through what they read and by contextualizing what they experience. The history of prophets demonstrates that they were all turned down and denigrated by their own people, but these prophets remained patient and courageously observed the details of their lifelong struggle until finally Allah’s (ﷻ) support relieved them from the animosity of their own. Therefore, when Muhammad (ﷺ) found himself being ridiculed and rebuked by the very people he came to rescue, he was comforted by the fact that their evolving attitudes and resentments were proceeding according to a social law, which would inevitably take its course in the same way it did with the circumstances of bygone prophets,

And if they [who are bent on denying the truth] say that what you are saying is false, [O Muhammad, remember that, long] before their time, the people of Noah and [the tribes of] ‘Ād and Thamūd also said so [to their prophets] (22:42);

And if they [the *mushriks*] are refuting what you are saying [of revelation] other peoples before your time were also refuting [revelation]... (35:4).

In their struggle, this social dynamic requires Prophets (ﷺ) to be patient and persistent,

And be unprotesting as were the apostles of resolve (*ulū al-‘azm*) (46:35);

And be forbearing of what they say and depart with them a graceful departure (73:10).

A third occasion illustrates this dynamic between a preaching prophet and a scorning society,

‘Utbaḥ ibn Rabi‘aḥ [a headman in society] spoke out one day as he was in the crowd of Quraysh while the Prophet (ﷺ) was in the *masjid* alone. He [Ibn Rabi‘aḥ] said, “O people of Quraysh! Ought I not go to Muhammad, speak to him, and offer him some incentives that he may be inclined to accept? That way we offer him what he wants and he then leaves us alone!”

This took place in the wake of Ḥamzaḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib becoming a Muslim, at a time when the number of Muslims was beginning to rise precipitously. They [the Quraysh] said, “By all means, go to him and try to convince him.” So ‘Utbaḥ went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and sat with him. He said, “My nephew! You know that you are a well-situated person in our social order and a scion of our offspring. You know you have come to your people with a larger-than-life issue by which you fragmented them, you frustrated their ambitions, you dishonored their deities, and [you] tainted their religion. You also doomed their forefathers. Therefore, listen to me. I have something to offer that you may want to consider. You may want to accept some of these offers.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “*Speak out O father of al-Walīd, I will listen.*” He said, “My nephew! If by what you are preaching you want money, we will collect for you from our money and possessions the amount that will make you the richest man among us. And if it is character and credibility that you seek, we will appoint you as our grand chief bar none; no decisions will be made without your approval. And if it is dominion you are seeking, we will nominate and name you our strong-

man and ruler. And if you are obsessed by paranormal and extrasensory forces that you cannot drive off, we will summon the best physicians and our resources to cure you of such debility.”

When ‘Utbaḥ was done speaking and the Prophet (ﷺ) was done listening, the latter said, “*Are you finished O father of al-Walīd?*” He said, “Yes.” Then the Prophet said, “*Listen to me!*” He said, “I will.” And he [the Prophet] announced the following *āyāt*,

Hā-Mīm. The bestowal from on high [of this revelation] issues from the Most Gracious, the Mercy-Giver: a divine Writ, the [power] substances and messages whereof have been clearly spelled out as a discourse in the Arabic tongue for people of [innate] knowledge, to be a herald of glad tidings as well as a warning. And yet, [whenever this divine Writ is offered to men], most of them turn away, so that they cannot hear [its message]; and so they say, [as it were], “Our hearts are veiled from whatever you call us to [O Muhammad], and in our ears is deafness, and between us and you is a barrier. Do, then, [whatever you will, whereas], behold, we shall do [as we have always done]!”

Say you, [O Prophet], “I am but a mortal like you. It has been revealed to me that your god is the One God: go, then, straight toward Him and seek His forgiveness!”

And woe unto those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him, [and] those who do not spend in [systemic] charity: for it is they, they who [thus] deny the truth of the life to come! (41:1–7).

The Prophet (ﷺ) continued in his reading of *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* (*Detailed* or *Unabridged*). And as ‘Utbaḥ was listening, he placed his hands behind his back as a support, paying careful attention as the Prophet reached the *sajdah āyah* (41:37). After he [the Prophet] did his *sajdah* (prostration), he said, “*O father of al-Walid! You heard and you listened. Now you have it — it is you and this is it [meaning, now it is your choice to make up your mind].*”

Then ‘Utbaḥ went back to his colleagues. They said, “By Allah! Abū al-Walid is returning with facial expressions unlike the ones he left with!” When he sat with them, they said, “What have you left behind?” He said, “I left behind listening to an articulation the likes of which I have never heard before, by Allah! I swear by Allah it is not magic, neither is it poetry, nor is it ceremonial liturgy. O folks of Quraysh! Listen to me and let me take care of it... Leave that man alone. Forsake him. By Allah, listening to what I have listened to, those words of his will have their reverberation. If the Arabians finish him off they will have spared you the task; and if he overcomes them by conquest, his success and dominion become yours, as will his glory... and you shall be [at that time] the happiest of people because of him...” They said, “He has, by Allah, beguiled you O father of al-Walid!” He replied, “This is my opinion, and you may do whatever you want to!”²⁷⁵

Numerous narratives along these lines convey the Qurayshī elites’ unmistakable impression that Muhammad (ﷺ) was a truthful and truth-telling man. The overriding reason these elites were jaded and biased concerns their not wanting to relinquish their worldly privileges, their social status, and their tribal or “national” interests. The issue of contention was their refusal to yield to Allah’s (ﷻ) authority. They did not want to declare, and then have to follow through on, “There is no authority/deity except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,” which is what

lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun rasūl Allāh means. They knew better what these words entail than today's average hereditary and traditional Muslim. This statement of faith, in its totality, meant to them what it should mean to us: that, from making the commitment forward, human beings will no longer be the sources and references of authority; that, after the application of these words of *shahādah*, authority will return to its proper and rightful author and generator — Allah (ﷻ). Thus in their world of *shirk*, the *kalimah* or *shahādah* was a subversive statement, an expression of radical change and “insubordination.” In point of fact, it was the *mushriks* who turned out to be the evildoers or the administrators of injustice. This understanding of context delivers the vibrant flavor deserved by the *āyah*, **“Well do We know that what such people say saddens you in reality: yet, behold, it is not you to whom they give the lie, but Allah’s power performance do these evildoers deny.”**

Social Progress Occurs through Struggle against Persecution

The Prophet needs Allah. And Allah is there when he needs Him. In an emotional condition requiring relief, Allah (ﷻ) explains in a rational way why these elements of society are severe in their opposition to His final Prophet. The clash between Quraysh’s truculence and Muhammad’s (ﷺ) determination was not something new; in fact, such face-offs had occurred with all the past prophets. The valuable information in this “human predicament” is the knowledge that this set of circumstances requires fortitude and the enabling strength of mind to endure adversity with courage, until Allah (ﷻ) decrees a breakthrough. This is a human dynamic and a social law that accompanies prophets and all humans who are in the mold of these prophets. On this course of required action buttressed by an undaunted psychology, there is no room for an opportunistic quick solution or a behind-the-scenes negotiation. Will there be harm along this prophetic course? Of course. Will there be accusations and innuendo? Without a doubt. Will there be personal attacks and social pressure? Certainly. But regardless of all that — or perhaps,

because of all that — there will also be a pending victory and a qualified (not complete) exultation,

And, be sure, [even] before your time [O Muhammad] have apostles been incriminated, and they endured with patience all those charges of falsification, and all the hurt done to them, until relief came to them from Us: for there is no power that could alter [the outcome of] Allah's words of honor. And some of the accounts of those apostles have already come to your attention (6:34).

The effort to move Allah's will into the social making of human life is an ancient one, going back to the dawn of history. This effort has been continuous and consistent, geographically dispersed but ideologically unified. And throughout time and locale there were always the types of people who were anti-prophet and anti-God. These people worked through cultures and customs, they were entrenched in institutions and establishments. Therefore, they could inflict much harm on the Prophets and Messengers of Allah (ﷺ), who wanted nothing other than to salvage human nature and spare human beings and human life the terrible consequences of running amok and taking over a world that has no acknowledged godly authority in its conscience. A world without the indubitable authority of Allah (ﷻ) becomes a world of bloodshed and paralysis. Therefore, Allah's Messengers had no choice but to stand up for their rights, stand on principle, and stand their ground until somewhere down the road, sometime in the future, somehow Allah (ﷻ) would deliver His alleviation. This road may seem to be unending and the task, at times, may appear daunting but prophets and their followers can rest assured that Allah (ﷻ) will come through with His upkeep and reinforcement. This is the meaning to be ingrained in the hearts of committed Muslims,

And, of a certainty, [even] before your time have messengers been held in suspicion and believed guilty, and

they endured with patience all those charges of falsification, and all the physical [and psychological] harm done to them, until support came to them from Us: for there is no power that could alter [the consequence of] Allah's promises. And some of the chronicles of those [preceding] apostles have been brought to your attention (6:34).

In these *āyāt*, Allah (ﷻ) is revealing words that are meant to "take the pressure off" the Prophet. The fact of the matter is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was in need of this reassuring revelation from His only source of support. And he received it because he was unprotesting and steady-going. The trouble with today's romantic "Islamists" is that they want the results achieved by the Prophet without their abiding the struggle and harm upon which those results are positioned. This is all part of the same social law (*sunnah*). The Prophet carried his load, so to speak, and was worthy of Allah's assistance, support, and sustenance. Today's Muslims, if they want to be true to their commitment to Allah, will have to carry the same load, with the expectation that they will have to endure the accompanying physical and psychological pressures. But the results will be worth the effort, the end-result being Allah's (ﷻ) reinforcement, aid, and backing. This *sunnah* has been at work ever since Allah commissioned prophets, dispatched messengers, and assigned apostles (ﷺ) to various peoples. There is an element of social struggle in this behavioral law as one side wants Allah's authority and guidance while the other side insists on its ungodly ways and inhumane procedures. The fact that the prophets and their "underclass" followers are on the receiving end of physical hardships and social stress while the tyrants, dictators, and their regimes are busy inflicting bodily harm and mental or emotional duress is only the build-up period for the eventual "maturity" that solicits Allah's (ﷻ) victory or successful conclusion to this whole impasse.

Societies, populations, and communities, especially those who have the capacity to shape the behavior of others, do not realize

what they are doing to themselves as they incrementally start disregarding Allah's (ﷻ) authority and objecting to His dominance. Even as they teeter on the precipice of destruction and annihilation, their self-absorption and arrogance has alienated them from sensing how far astray they have actually gone. The prophets and their dedicated followers feel the double pressure of, firstly, being the victims of rejection in their own societies and then, secondly, being drawn to a disastrous end. In other words, society is self-destructing, and as it self-destructs, it wants to destroy the prophet sent to deliver it. Prophets know they are “working against time” when they have nothing to show for their struggle and sacrifices. But it is when they begin to feel their weakness and the social inertia around them, it is precisely at this time that they need Allah more than anything else, and it is exactly within this time frame that Allah (ﷻ) comforts them. In these *āyāt*, it is Muhammad (ﷺ) who is being comforted, along with the committed Muslims around him.

Few circumstances are harder to cope with than to be an outcast among your own people, to be accused of deserting your own culture, and to be the object of ridicule and defamation by your own society. As they reach this critical or tipping point in their struggle, prescient humans and their indomitable prophets realize that this is when Allah (ﷻ) takes over, and that the only thing required of them moving forward is to continue with the sincerity of their hearts and the limited leverage of their short lives,

And if their [the social elites'] detachment distresses you — why, then, if you are able to find a way deep down into the earth or a course high up into the sky that would deliver an *āyah* to them, [do so]; but [remember that] had Allah so willed, He would indeed have amassed them together on the grounds of [His] guidance. Do not, therefore, fail to notice [Allah's social laws]. Only those who listen [with their moral sense] can respond [to Allah], and as for the dead [of heart], Allah [alone] can regenerate them, whereupon unto Him they shall return (6:35–36)).

In reflecting on this more extensively, consider that the Prophet, having suffered tremendously at the hands of his own people, was anxious for them to “see the light.” He was eager to bring them into affirming the authority and power of Allah (ﷻ), even though they used everything within their reach to frustrate and fail him. Muhammad (ﷺ), who is one of the five most determined and resolute apostles (*ulū al-‘aẓm min al-rusul*), who did not turn against his society and people as Nūḥ (ﷺ) finally did, and who withstood all possible trials and tribulations — even he — is being taught the social law that all committed Muslims should learn.²⁷⁶

In the common language of everyday people, the *āyah* is saying, in effect, to Muhammad (ﷺ) that a divine social law applies to his energetic attempts to achieve Allah’s (ﷻ) goals, to his strenuous efforts to convince his people: outcomes are determined by Allah and no amount of intelligent persuasion, beseeching, and character disposition — even miracles — is going to soften hearts hardened by the license to wield power without accountability. Given the Prophet’s avidity in trying to have his people respond favorably to his call, coupled with his grief that the objects of his entreaties elicited no significant or worthwhile response, withdrew from him altogether, or alienated him, Allah comforts him by arguing that even if he were to produce for them a more convincing “power manifestation” by digging deep into the earth or by climbing way up into the heavens, they would not commit to what is right and just. These words, even as they are directed at the Prophet, may appear to be sharp and stinging, but the fact has to sink in — human beings, prophets included, can only do so much. All of them have to come to terms with the limits of their “delivery performance.”

Knowing this, however, should not be cause for Muslims to slow down or turn away from their divine duties and required responsibilities. They are simply being advised to be mature in the way they approach things, and how they set up their expectations. Hence, a people’s proper relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is not going to occur because of some supernatural event, paranormal act, or miraculous feat. Their commitment and affirmation of Allah will come through the agency of a sensitive heart, considerate con-

science, and rational mind. Had Allah willed, they would have been in their proper relationship with Him from the beginning, either by His creating them in an angelic mode or by His infusing their senses and hearts with an “automatic” receptivity that would respond positively when they heard His words. Or perhaps He could have devised other measures that would “efface” their humanity or “exempt” their humanness in responding to Him. But, in the end, those were not the human and social variables within which this dynamic of persuasion was to unfold.

Simply stated, Allah (ﷻ) created man as a human and social being with all the incentives accruing to him and the disincentives he is exposed to. That is why we are humans. We behave and function within the complex emotions and thoughts constituting our human nature and human will. We are not to be confused with lesser forms of life nor with higher forms of life. We neither belong to the animal kingdom nor to the angelic assembly. We possess a variety of inclinations and potentials, that, if channeled in the service of truth and justice, could drive us above the rank of angels, and conversely, if exploited for exclusivity and tyranny, could drop us below the rank of animals. We have a diverseness in the way we react to stimuli and reciprocate with thoughts. Therefore, we are different in the way we respond to the message of Allah, to the revelation from heaven, and to the prophets on earth who are communicators of these holy writs and scriptures. We also have our limitations and tendencies on the one hand and our talents and aptitudes on the other. The human factor, human conditions, human characteristics are so numerous and so complex that it will take time to “season” them onto a unified directional course so that they can bear this prophetic struggle on earth with its divine origins and its afterworld objectives.

Thus, Allah (ﷻ) did not gather people unto His guidance by some intrinsic and automatic response that He placed in their human composition. Rather He summons them to His guideposts and guidance, leaving it up to them as a matter of their free will to respond in the affirmative or the negative. They may choose to obey Him or disobey Him. But as a consequence of this decision or by the

end of this life there shall be a fair payback. Hence, Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) is advised to be aware of this and to not "get carried away,"

Had Allah so willed, He would indeed have gathered them unto [His] guidance. Do not, therefore, allow yourself to ignore [Allah's social laws] (6:35).

A very important aspect of this on-and-off contact between the Prophet and his Arabian audience is that even though they were indifferent and unenthusiastic with him, he was not uninterested in or detached from them. He belonged to them in the manner of communication even though he no longer belonged to them in the matter of their culture and governance. He may have withdrawn from them mentally and emotionally but not physically and socially. It is this contrast in attitudes that is described by the *āyah*,

Only those who listen [with their heart and conscience] can respond [to Allah's call]; and as for the dead [of heart and conscience], Allah [alone] can revivify them, whereupon unto Him they shall return (6:36).

And so, people can be divided into two categories. In the first, the people are sensitive, insightful, and thus receptive to these words of Allah (ﷻ). They only need to listen to be convinced of the truth, "Responsive are those who are listening [with their locus of feelings and intuition]..."

In the second category, the people are dull of heart and dead in conscience. Their human nature has disintegrated to the point that they cannot hear, and so how will they respond? They are not moved by what Allah (ﷻ) says and thus they do not answer. The disparity here lies with them and the choices they made to arrive at this low point, not with this Scripture and Prophet. The proof of the truth is lodged in the meanings of this Book and in the conduct of this Prophet (ﷺ). Unpolluted human nature and human beings will find something that interests them in this Scripture. The problem with some people is that life has been sapped from their other-

wise lofty human nature, which has been conditioned into fecklessness by arrogance, birthright, and all the other trappings of privilege, status, class, and wealth. Their senses have been dulled and thus their receptivity is mute. Insofar as such people are concerned, neither the Prophet nor anyone else is going to be able to penetrate their minds and hearts. They are not open to new ideas, change, and debate. Their progress, or lack of it, has to be referred to Allah's will. They may at some point come to their senses, they may have a life-altering experience, they may be shocked into reality, or there just may be something that will open up their hearts and revitalize their inner selves. Yet, even so, some of them who are physically alive but mentally and spiritually dead may have doomed themselves to a life with no verve or vitality, and thus are beyond redemption, **“And as for the dead [of heart], Allah [alone] can raise them from the dead, whereupon unto Him they shall return.”** What this means is that the committed Muslims are being encouraged to work with this rich prophetic experience, which in and of itself is human to the core, and not smother themselves with self-doubt and despondency when the influential powerbrokers of a corrupt social order do not respond as hoped.

Not Granting Material Miracles Is an Expression of God's Mercy

The moral and practical lesson now turns from the facts pertaining to Muhammad and his fellow prophets (ﷺ) to the *mushriks* and their demands, specifically their requesting a miracle from on high. The *āyāt* suggest that this type of request betrays their ignorance of Allah's (ﷻ) social laws. They demonstrate little knowledge or concern about how His mercy works. For if they were presented with a miracle, and subsequently they were to reject the faith and commitment due upon them as is contingent with a miracle, then Allah's social law would be to obliterate them. Even in turning their petition down, Allah expresses how merciful He can be. In a divine manner that often goes undetected by man, it is Allah's decree to spare him the worst social consequences when he seems to be requesting and wanting them. Man's psychological and impetuous

desires will affect his social condition(s). People, when they are either on a course of guidance or misdirection, may not consciously realize that within both of those courses are peculiar social laws, which take root and then develop according to Allah's (ﷻ) will and decree. Now, consider once again the *āyāt*,

And they say, “Why has no miraculous sign [of power performance] been bestowed on him [Muhammad] from on high by his Sustainer?” Say, “Behold, Allah has the power to bestow any sign [of power] from on high.” Yet most human beings are unaware of this — although there is no creature walking on earth and no bird flying on its two wings that is not [Allah’s] created being like yourselves: no single thing have We neglected in Our decree. And once again: unto their Sustainer shall they [all] be gathered.

And those who express objections to Our messages [of power] are deaf and dumb, in deep darkness. Whomever Allah wills, He lets go astray; and whomever He wills, He attends to a straight path (6:37–39).

The Arabian *mushriks* were asking for a material miracle, as did the folks of earlier prophets. There were not satisfied with the miraculous communication, correspondence, and cognitive content of this clear Qur’an. This redoubtable Qur’an and scrupulous Prophet should have sufficed any thinking individual or segment of society. One of the more durable manifestations of divine power is to give people a Book that goes directly to their sense of reasoning. This holy Word of God breaks with earlier methods of revelation in as much as it plays down the physical miracles and plays up the “mental miracles.” This divine Discourse (the Qur’an) ennoble the human intellect, the ability to think, and the power of reasoning. This type of “miracle” does not die off when the first generation of a new society passes on. Because it resonates with human reason, it will continue as long as there are thinking beings. The miracle of this Qur’an, whose ongoing revelations can never be exhausted, is

located not in the momentary thrill of the abnormal and phantasmal, but rather in the exhilaration of realizing truths as yet undiscovered and of experiencing social laws as yet unperceived.

People in their primitive reaction to scripture and impulsive expectation of prophet are in the habit of demanding largely sensory miracles that contravene the otherwise expected behavior of their physical environment,

...and forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them. Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (Psalms, 78:11–19).

Miracles — deeds beyond the normal range of human power to enact — are chronicled throughout the Bible, from God’s creation of the world to the coming of Jesus (✠) and his resurrection (according to the contemporary “Christian” reading of history). In their current form, both the Old and New Testaments use various words to convey the concept of miracles, such as *signs*, *works*, or *acts*. Some miracles, such as the appearance of God to Moses (✠) as a burning bush that was not incinerated by the fire (Exodus, 3:1–22), confirmed Israel as His chosen people (according to Judeo-Christian interpretation). Other kinds of miracles included those of divine rescue, such as when the Lord saved Daniel from death in the lions’ den (Daniel, 6:16–23). The plagues that God sent to

Egypt were miraculous demonstrations of His power both to redeem and to punish. At other times God bestowed an individual — such as Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha — with miraculous powers so as to enable him to act on His behalf.²⁷⁷

In the New Testament, Jesus (ﷺ) is the principal worker of miracles, although miraculous deeds are also attributed to his disciples. Jesus performed many miracles of healing and exorcism, demonstrating the presence of God in his life. But he asked that these acts not be spoken of and refused demands that he work miracles simply to prove divine power, insisting that faith in God was all that mattered. In some Christian quarters faith induces miracles and miracles spur faith. Thus, when Jesus appeared in Nazareth, the lack of faith there made it impossible for him to perform anything but a few minor healings (Mark, 6:4–6).

This “popular demand” for physical and tangible miracles has its consequences. It is Allah’s (ﷻ) law to wipe out people who deny Him subsequent to their being privy to His miraculous physical power. If people were to reflect upon the dire consequences of turning away from Allah after His presentation of physical and palpable miracles they would rather not ask for such sensational wonders. Nonetheless, Allah Himself demonstrates His mercy for such people, knowing they will deny Him long after the memory of that physical miracle has faded away.²⁷⁸

It is an expression of Allah’s mercy to give people the latitude to slowly but surely commit to Him and have faith in Him through indirect or derived miracles. In this alternate sequence of events, if the ancestors do not commit to Allah (ﷻ) there is reason to believe that the offspring will eventually commit to Him, affirm Him, and have trust in Him. Most people have a hard time fathoming what a mercy it is to not have spectacular yet imposing, substantial yet crushing miracles to quickly captivate the senses of man. Such events or acts, as astonishing and breathtaking as they may be when they do occur — like the parting of the sea or enabling a blind person to see for the first time — have catastrophic consequences when people ultimately deny the God who performed these astounding marvels.

The *mushriks* in Arabia demanded of the Prophet (ﷺ) these types of tangible and substantial miracles. The Qur'an registers their attitudes and social behavior. Allah points out that such a social attitude belies the ignorance of a people who have no knowledge of historical events and no experience with ancient civilizations and cultures. Were they versed on the rise and fall of societies and authorities they would appreciate the fact that Allah does not respond to their “miracles-on-demand” requests. Despite their insolence and impertinence, Allah reiterates that He is able and competent to dispense miracles of the type they want. But it is His wisdom and mercy, which He decreed upon Himself, that overrides their headlong anticipation, that precludes the horrible consequences visited upon those earlier generations who denied God after He gave them the miracles they asked for,

And they say, “Why has no physical miraculous event been bestowed on him [Muhammad] from on high by his Sustainer?” Say, “Lay eyes on [the fact that] Allah has the power to bestow any sign from on high.” Yet most human beings are unaware of this... (6:37).

The compassion and sympathy from on high toward people who are ignorant or who are in a hurry to have things done are evident in the ensuing sentence. In it is a motivation that stimulates the mind to carefully observe the world around and to concentrate on the facts of life, all with a view to detect the hand of God at work in all aspects of human life,

There is no animate being walking on earth and no bird flying on its two wings that is not [Allah's] species like yourselves: no single thing have We slighted in Our decree. And thereupon to their Sustainer shall they [all] be assembled (6:38).

That man is not alone in this life and universe is no revelation. Man's creation and existence is not random or coincidental. There-

fore, his life cannot be cheap or crude. In the world and beyond, man coexists with other forms and quantities of life. All these living organisms have been organized and harmonized. This grand coordination — the skillful and effective interaction of movements, spaces, and beings — discloses a quality and quantity of wisdom, integrity, and intention that cannot be denied by working minds and functioning intellects. Those beings gifted with the capacity to reflect and contemplate can only attribute this to a unity of purpose and a uniformity of initiation and apotheosis (model of excellence and perfection). In other words, the enlightened mental world of humans cannot escape the fact that there is one program at work — not the conflicting or incongruous programs belonging to multiple origins and competing originations at the level of human creation, social development, and historical progression.

No form of life on earth, including bugs, insects, microbes, etc; no two-winged bird or fly; and no other animated forms of life exist except as a species. Each has its unique specifications and characteristics to go along with its established patterns, routines, practices, and customs. This continuous variation in form among members of a widespread population is a common feature of creation. And all these species have been equipped with the wherewithal to survive and multiply. As much as all of these things apply, so too will all these organized forms of life ultimately be amassed in the presence of the Creator. And He will do His will as He decrees.

A *species* is a group of organisms or other entities formally recognized as distinct from other groups. In its most common biological usage, a *species* is a taxonomic group of actually or potentially interbreeding natural populations, reproductively isolated from other similar groups such that exchange of genetic material cannot occur. Most species cannot interbreed with others; those that can, typically produce infertile offspring. This biological concept of species cannot be applied to fossils, or to organisms that do not reproduce sexually. Such organisms are categorized on a comparative morphological (pertaining to geological structure) basis.²⁷⁹

Therefore, the word *ummaḥ* in this *āyaḥ* and in this context is not the *community*, *society*, or *nation* that is to be found in the mean-

ings of other *āyāt* and their particular contexts. Here it refers to a *species*. The inference in the *āyah* here is that Allah's (ﷻ) power is manifested in the fact that these creatures are all “disciplined” to behave within their own taxonomical or biological conventions and dispositions. They are all functioning within certain biological and social laws, not to mention psychological and physical laws. All these forms of life, categories of species, and classifications of populations are going to be gathered together on the Last Day,

There is no animate being walking on earth and no bird flying on its two wings that is not [Allah's] creature-species like yourselves: no single thing have We neglected in Our decree. And once again: unto their Sustainer shall they [all] be gathered (6:38).

Digging a little deeper here, on earth there are many areas in which what is permitted and what is not still remains to be discovered, although it seems certain that mild pollution leading to no more than a deterioration in the quality of human life and, perhaps, a small reduction in human life expectancy, will cause little harm to the planet as a whole. Many popular environmental concerns, such as slight radioactive pollution from nuclear power installations, appear to be assuming, more and more, little real importance.²⁸⁰

Other human interventions in the system may be more serious. For example, there is a limit beyond which man should not interfere with the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂). If it falls below a certain critical value plant growth will be inhibited, which is expected to lead to severe climatic cooling. Its aberrational increase may cause a warming effect, partly offset perhaps by the cloud-seeding activities of phytoplankton, but now that so much of the Earth's atmospheric carbon has already been removed, the overall stability of the climatic system is open to serious question. Might a perturbation cause the world climate to alter suddenly and radically, either oscillating between severe cold and intense warmth, or might it destabilize to produce conditions much hotter than those we have now?²⁸¹

Will the ongoing decimation of forests in the humid tropics alter the cycling of water locally, thereby producing climatic changes with more global effects? Will drastically altering the rate at which CO₂ is removed from the air release larger amounts of CO₂ held at present in tropical soils? Man does not really know, but it might be as well to proceed cautiously until he has more information. Even so, there are a few clues. Scientists have observed, for example, that the greater the diversity of species, the more sensitive the system is to change, and the more effectively and quickly it acts to restore the conditions it prefers. Tropical forests are the richest and most diverse of all habitats in terms of the species they contain. The species may be of little importance individually, but taken together they may be essential.²⁸²

There are also regions to which most people pay little attention but which may be even more vital to man's well-being. The sediments seen as coastal and estuarine muds when they are exposed at low tide, but which extend over much of every continental shelf, are not especially attractive, yet they provide the airless conditions in which countless numbers of microorganisms thrive, and those microorganisms play crucial roles in the cycling of essential elements between sea, air, and land. They have been playing this role since long before any of the larger plants and animals seemed to have appeared and thrived on earth. They could survive without man, but it is doubtful whether man could survive without them.²⁸³

Some scientific theories, such as the Gaian theory, refute the old notion of organisms adapting to environments over which they have no control, and reject the crude symbolism of "Spaceship Earth" together with many newsworthy and apparently spectacular environmental issues that are revealed (by the theory) as imaginary or trivial. This theory approaches the study of the earth in a much more profound way that allows researchers to look beyond symptoms to their underlying causes. Like illnesses, these causes are often complex, not easy to understand even for scientists, and almost impossible to describe accurately in non-technical language. Yet, like an accurate diagnosis of illness, the application of a detailed knowl-

edge of geo-physiology will one day allow remedies to be prescribed that treat planetary ailments with clinical precision.²⁸⁴

Hence, man in his mind, through his thoughts, and by his experience is directed to observe Allah's power in this area; by doing so he will come to realize His power manifestations in what is physical and in what is social. And should man choose not to honor this divine social law that applies to societies and all species (*ummaḥs*) within such societies,

And those who raise objections to Our power manifestations are deaf and dumb, in deep darkness. Whomever Allah wills, He lets go astray, and whomever He wills, He guides to a straight course (6:39).

Reinforcing the original observation, people who are hearing with intention and resolve will respond positively while those who are intuitively dead will not. But now we have a new scene and a new scenario. Those who raise objections to Allah's (ﷻ) power manifestations in the sphere of existence and His power illustrations on the pages of His Book do so because their sensory receptors are out of order or simply malfunctioning. Their capacity to actively listen (spoken or written words that interact with a receptive heart and an open mind), wholly or in part, has been compromised; thus, lacking the necessary intellectual acuity, they are slow to understand. They are unable to see the truth because their life patterns and choices are not based on reason and evidence. This is not to say that they have no eyes, ears, and mouths; certainly they do. But their process of perceiving, the way they conceive things is nonfunctional. It is as if these sensors have failed to engage and operate. In other words, there are those who are blind, but can still “see,” and there are those who can see, but are nonetheless “blind.” These *āyāt* of power in this Book of authority have the potency to influence anyone with a sensitive heart and an insightful mind. The types of people who walk away from this rational Writ are the ones who are damaged at the acumen and appreciation level. They simply disqualify themselves from a life of rectitude and from progress in general.

This all happens consistent with Allah's (ﷻ) will and not regardless of it. For it is Allah who created life and human beings with the willingness either to be good and virtuous, or to be bad and evil. This disposition duality is the way man is by virtue of his very nature. He can choose a course that leads to Allah or he can choose other directions that take him away from God. There are those who observe their life course with reference to Allah's Scripture while there are others who proceed on a divergent course, disregarding scripture altogether. Very few people are condemned to make this choice under threat of coercion or due to a lack of freedom and liberty. Thus does Allah affect man's decisions, not by creating an automaton who is pre-programmed to go to heaven or pre-programmed to go to hell, but through the composition and the various vagaries of his nature. Social laws have been placed into human lives, either causing them to move closer to Allah or farther away from Him. This is another way of looking at the "Will of Allah (ﷻ)." People who struggle for Allah will one day see the inevitable beautiful results while those who struggle against Him will experience the ugly consequences of their choice. With liberty granted to all willful beings, Allah is not doing injustice to anyone.

Both man's propensity to virtue or vice, to social construction or social destruction, are part of human nature and social nature. Both, in their full range of excellence and villainy, are a matter of Allah's will. The tendency toward good or inclination toward its antithesis is the way Allah created life and structured humanity. Thus, the results of both tendencies are also results that occur within the testament of Allah. Hence, Allah's (ﷻ) fixed purpose and persistent intent is active and absolute. Therefore, given that human nature has a dual predilection for benevolence as well as malevolence, the ultimate compensation or payback depends on man's choice and direction in life.

Instant Miracles and Status-Quo Islam Amount to the Same

What do these instructions mean in a world gripped by governments, regimes, and power cultures opposed to Allah (ﷻ), scripture, and prophet? This Qur'an has encompassed human nature, the human factor, the human condition, and humanity from the time it was declared, and will continue to do so until the end of time. It cannot be antiquated into an ancient historical period, nor can it be idiosyncratic to a peculiar Arabian society. It is timeless, dateless, and endless. So how are these inexhaustible and ageless *āyāt* to be understood in today's fluctuation of desires, decisions, and dictates?

To begin with, walking in the footsteps of prophets cannot be easy. Their strides are effortful, sometimes strenuous, and require an unqualified determination. These *āyāt* indicate that Allah's aid is imminent and His assistance is pending but they will only arrive when Allah Himself decrees and wills it in accordance with His knowledge and sagacity. This timing of Allah's help and assistance remains in the realm of the "unknown;" not even the Prophet (ﷺ) was aware of its exact moment of exposition.

The strains and stresses attending the paces of prophets may be attributable to two states of affairs: the objections and accusations leveled against this divine mission being implemented by humans; and the declared and undeclared wars against those who follow in the footsteps of prophets. Complicating things a little more is the sincere Muslim's anxiousness in having others experience the thoroughgoing satisfaction and intimate gratification that comes from making one's own decision to adhere to Allah (ﷻ). In other words, the keenness in the hearts and minds of committed Muslims gushes forth as the social motivation to invite other people into tasting the delicacy and elegance of this *dīn*. This eagerness weighs as much on the Muslims' conscience as does the unsettlement related to clashing with hostile quarters. All of this put together becomes an intimidating challenge indeed.

The flow of Qur'anic *āyāt* here addresses the schizophrenic nature of the *mushriks*: those who object to this *dīn* and wage war against it know very well that what this *dīn* represents is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. They know that the

Messenger (ﷺ) who is communicating this godly Scripture is himself honest, responsible, and time-tested. In spite of this knowledge, however, they are not receptive, persisting in their renunciation and stubbornness. Vested interests are compelled to raise objections because they inherently thrive on corruption, injustice, and obfuscation — the very antitheses of truth. By its nature, truth is self-evident. It is instinctively appealing, provided that human-nature itself has not gone awry, is still sensitive, and receptive, “...those who respond or those who [consciously] listen.” Regrettably, those who disagree and express opposition to the truth have killed off their senses, their hearts are no longer alive, and because of this sensory decay they can no longer perceive how deadly and disorderly they have become. Even the Prophet cannot get through to them, and hence they are beyond the reach of common sense and rational receptivity. And so too it goes for people in the path of prophets: they cannot revive dead matter. Bringing such individuals back to their senses and into a worthy life is an act of God.

On the other hand, for those who have to endure this rejection and then prepare to confront these discordant “sovereigns” and their enablers, with the force of arms if necessary, Allah’s (ﷻ) help is pending, without a doubt. Man here has to realize that this help materializes according to Allah’s *sunnah* (social law) and in fulfillment of His will. No committed Muslim can doubt the eventual arrival of Allah’s help and no committed Muslim can doubt its timing. In regard to man’s limited calculation, it does not come early and it is never too late. How can our own suffering and pain hasten Allah’s help and victory when even the hardship and anguish of prophets did not precipitate them? It is the unconditional surrender to Allah’s will by committed Muslims, their positive patience with the pressures of the powers that be, and their unshakable trust in the outcome that go into a pending victory timed by Allah (ﷻ) and none other.

In the middle of all this, the Prophet (ﷺ) and his devoted champions should know that their fundamental task is to communicate this Word of God and to continue to do so, come what may, with inexhaustible patience. As to whether people are going to re-

spond and be guided, that is, whether they have a change of heart, this is beyond the capacities of a mortal being. It is not consistent with the “job-description” of a prophet or his avid followers. The popular response, or lack thereof, is an element of Allah’s (ﷻ) *sunan*. The Muslims’ enthusiasm is not going to bring someone closer to Allah; likewise their agitation with those who are at war with Allah and His Prophet is not going to “adjust” His *sunan*. Faithful personalities have no impact on the course of this social reality. They are not going to be rewarded by the number of people who see the light. Their reward is contingent upon the quality of their commitment, the consistency of their continuity, and the wellspring of their calmness. What the objects of their invitation will do or not do in reaction to their commitment, composure, and cohesion is a dynamic that is controlled by the Sustainer of all,

And had Allah willed He would have assembled them on [a course of] guidance... Whomever Allah wills, He lets go astray; and whomever He wills, He places upon a straight path (6:35–39).

Finally, it is not Allah (ﷻ) who forces people into guidance or distracts them into waywardness. They make up their own minds and weigh their own decisions, in the end reaping what they had sown.

While the road to paradise is full of challenges and demanding situations, it does not behoove a covenant-bearing Muslim to be trapped or influenced by suggestions coming from the opposing side of this issue. This divine program works with a godlike method. Just because the pressure is immense and the Islamic work seems to be going nowhere, cautious and attentive Muslims should never think about embellishing this *dīn* so that it becomes more appealing to the expectations, interests, and whims of its opponents. The *mushriks* demanded sensory and material miracles; they did so at the level of their “civilization” and in conformity with their culture — as the Qur’an elucidates over and over again. Their insistent social attitude is captured in the following *āyāt*,

And they [the *mushriks*] said, “But only if he [Muhammad] had an angel come down [to assist him]” (6:8);

And they said, “If only a [physical] miracle came down on him from his Sustainer” (6:37);

And they swore by Allah solemnly and seriously to the extent of their faith, “If a miracle were to come to them they would believe in it” (6:109).

In other *sūrah*s there appears to be more aggressiveness in their demands; for instance, consider the following *āyāt* from *Sūrah al-Isrā'* and *al-Furqān*,

And they [the *mushriks*] said, “We will not commit ourselves to you until you [Muhammad] cause water to spring out of the earth for us, or until you are in possession of a date-palm orchard with running water bursting through it, or until you bring down the heavens in pieces upon us as you claim will happen, or until you present to us Allah and the angels in attendance, or until you have an elaborate mansion, or until you ascend into the heavens — but no, we would not believe you even if you did ascend into the heavens until you bring down to us a book that we can read!” (17:90–93);

And they [the *mushriks*] said, “Why does this apostle eat food and walk the streets. If only an angel would come down to him and be a fellow-warner [along with him]. Or if only he [Muhammad] would receive a treasure, or if he had a grove to eat from!” (25:7–8).

The instructions to the Prophet (ﷺ) and to his devout disciples in the passage of *Sūrah al-An‘ām* above teach that no one should be tempted to respond to their miracle requests, or influenced

to satisfy whatever other equivalent demands they may have. The words are clear,

If you [Muhammad] find their [*mushriks*'] objection to be unfathomable, then try, if you can, to penetrate the earth or get through the sky to produce an *āyah* for them; rather had Allah decreed, He would have gathered them all on [a path of] guidance. Be not of those deficient of knowledge. Instead, those who respond are those who [wittingly] listen; and those who are dead [in their senses] they will be regenerated by Allah, and to Him shall they return (6:35–36).

By demanding that a miracle (*āyah*) take shape in front of their very eyes, the *mushriks* were imputing they would commit to and affirm the authority of Allah (ﷻ); as a result, some committed Muslims were inclined to respond to their disingenuous demands. And so Allah sets them straight,

Say, “But *āyāt* are in the power of Allah alone.” And for all you know, even if one were shown to them, they will not commit themselves. And We will shift their temper and imaginativeness as if they have never committed themselves to it before, and We will let them, through their extreme heavy-handedness, lose sight [of the fact and truth] (6:109).

Committed and vigilant Muslims should be aware enough to know that an *āyah* or two will not preclude objecting individuals and societies from becoming subjects of Allah (ﷻ). What the latter are lacking is the ability of discernment, that is, listening and reflecting on the way to obedience. In a real sense, they are virtually dead. According to the social laws at work in the human domain, they have no share of guidance and thereby no direction in life. This *dīn* itself works within and by the social laws drawn by Allah and embedded in life and existence. No prophet or committed Muslim

should ever place himself in a position to try to honor the desires of those who reject God.

This leads into another important point. This Qur'an is not bound to a particular time in history, to a specific place, or to a certain people. It was not meant to solve the problems of one society only. The Qur'an and its Prophet (ﷺ) do not belong to one generation only. And finally, both are not to be subjected to the suggestions of their opponents and the propositions of their antagonists. Change, however, is inexorable. The world will continue to go on developing its material resources and technological potentials. But by virtue of these material "advancements" and physical "progress," no sincere Muslim who has invested in these *āyāt* should think for one second that there is something beneficial or helpful non-Muslims or anti-Muslims can offer to implement this reverent program on earth. It is this penchant of today's confidence-lacking Muslims that is behind their trying to tailor Islam to the political processes in Europe and America.

The assumption of these "Islamists" is that an Islam working within the status quo is capable of working out the "un-Islamic" through the social mechanisms and political procedures of non-Islamic establishments, anti-Islamic governments, and counter-Islamic regimes. Many decades may yet pass before the economic toll on the lives of Muslims living in these societies, as well as on Muslims who are impacted by these Euro-American societies and governments across the globe, causes the "American-Islam" types to wake up one day to find that all the men and money dedicated to tailoring Islam to the status quo of *kufr* were in vain. In addition, walking in lockstep with the orientalist university tradition of treating Islam as an object of "investigation," there are now the academic and theoretical Muslims who want to theorize and hypothesize about Islam in books, research papers, and classified information, thinking that by so doing they are on their way to an Islamic state. Not to be grandiose, but all these efforts disregard Allah and are dismissive of His guidance. Why? Those very words of divine advice and counsel are trying to alert discerning Muslims to the fact that elites and classes of people are not opposed to Islam

because of a lack of accurate information; rather they are opposed to it because they have accurate information about Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the *dīn* he came with.

The trend today in the West and in the East, in Europe and America as well as in Asia and Africa, is to enlist “Muslims” who are intent on building a synergy between Islam and “democracy” (in Western policy circles, these are classified as the “moderate” Muslims) in the political process, to involve them in the civic world, and to register them to vote. The desired outcome here, as an affirmation of secular political processes and governance paradigms, is for them to be voted into a non-Islamic office, to be nominated as public officials, and to be appointed as diplomats or even judges. And to give credence to this agenda, which has been given all the Madison Avenue gloss to make it look like it is all-inclusive, Islamic councils, committees, and corporations have popped out of the woodwork to push the “Islamization” of secularism.

Further along these lines of catering to the anti-Islamic establishments, “Islamist” individuals and their associations are willing to hyphenate themselves to normalize their misguided attachment to the trappings of temporal materialistic power. Their wish is to subject Islam to contemporary political currents that at the end of the day are the real enemies of the committed and conscientious Muslims. Hence, in America, they take great pride in calling themselves “Republican Muslims” or “Democratic Muslims,” and if the trend continues in this capitulationist direction, it will not be long before their acolytes are thrilled at the prospect of “Hindu Muslims,” “Zionist Muslims,” or any other type of Shayṭānī Muslim.

At one time in the not-so-distant past, when fascism was in vogue, some Muslims were clamoring about the “fact” that Islam is fascist because it believes in a strongman, a maximalist leader, and a devotion to the Imam. But then, when fascism, particularly Nazism, faded into obscurity in the aftermath of WWII, so too did these faux-Islamic voices whose *raison d’être* came from fascism, not the Qur’an. Similarly, socialism and communism captured the imagination of masses of people, especially intellectuals among the oppressed, across the globe. Subsequently, Muslim writers and

speakers began expressing their thoughts about how Islam is socialist or how its socialism predated modern socialism by 13 centuries. However, when the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc in the world collapsed these voices also fell silent. To give them the benefit of the doubt, all these and similar efforts were probably done with good intentions. Many of the advocates of a fascist Islam or a socialist Islam were doing and saying whatever they did to try to promote and popularize a certain misdirected impression of Islam. Obviously, none of that worked.

The major difference between Islam as a social order and other ideologies or political structures is that, in Islam, authority belongs to Allah (ﷻ); in these other systems the authority of God is subsumed to the ineptness of man. Islam in theory is perfect and impeccable; these other ideologies in theory are flawed and incomplete. Islam is propelled by justice and is championed by the deprived. The other antithetical man-made programs are propelled by a capitalist mania and sired by the wealthy and the elites.

How low have the Muslims stooped when they find themselves “patching up” the word *islam* with nomenclature and phraseology that are taken from the books and reference material of those who have been and still are at war with Islamic freedom, Islamic liberation, and Islamic self-determination? Islam is Allah’s (ﷻ) program; why would anyone want to taint it with the programs of error-prone people, fallible philosophers, or ignorant ideologues?

The cardinal sin of those Arabian *mushriks* was their imposition of some man-made authorities in place of Allah (ﷻ). These authorities became their *awliyā*’ (rank superiors), **“And those who assign rank authority to other than Allah [are wont to say], ‘But we only conform to them so that they may bring us considerably closer to Allah...’” (39:3)**. This is out-and-out *shirk*. At that time, the Arabian *mushriks* were justifying other superiors by saying that these mortal authorities are a means of drawing them nearer to Allah. In today’s world, contemporary Arabian *mushriks* are trying to make Allah palatable to secular and *kāfir* authorities by reinterpreting Qur’anic *āyāt* to give imperialists and Zionists a foothold on the divine platform. The Arabian *mushriks* of that ancient time

placed Allah higher than His *shurakā’* (associate authorities); in today’s political climate the *mushriks* occupying that same land consider Allah lower than His *shurakā’*, the rank authorities represented by kings and kingdoms, presidents and republics, and corporate lords and financial robber barons.

Let there be no doubt in anyone’s mind, intellectual or otherwise, that Islam has its independent character, not to be confused with socialism or capitalism. Socialism has its multiple interpretations and practices, but none of them can be associated with Islam. And democracy is a makeshift arrangement for people to believe they are participants in deciding their own affairs — away from God, scripture, and apostle. Islam is Allah’s (ﷻ) program and it should never be confused with man-made programs, be they on the political left or the political right.

If this “Muslim inferiority complex” continues into the future, the day will certainly come, if Zionism becomes triumphant (God forbid), when wannabe “Zionist Muslims” will come out of the closet, saying, “But Islam has always championed the Children of Israel, the underclass in Egypt, the oppressed in their diaspora. Who dare say that Islam is incompatible with Zionism?!” In fact, that day may already be here; on a visit to Jerusalem where he met officials from the Israeli foreign ministry and then signed a memorandum of understanding making him the first Saudi “honorary ambassador” to Israel, Saudi Prince al-Walīd ibn Ṭalāl, a 20% owner of the rabidly Islamophobic *Fox News*, made the following statement (2016),

I will side with the Jewish nation and its democratic aspirations... and I shall exert all my influence to break any ominous Arab initiatives set to condemn Tel Aviv, because I deem the Arab-Israeli entente and future friendship necessary to impede the dangerous Iranian encroachment... I am indeed proud to be the first Saudi ambassador to this beautiful country. Israel is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world and I can express my appreciation of [the] lofty ethics which Israel’s founding fathers built this country upon.²⁸⁵

This *dīn* does not need the deceptively attractive components of capitalism, socialism, democracy, or any other man-made and man-contrived system on earth. They are all destined to self-destruct because they are faulty and defective in theory and in practice. Islam, though, is not defective or faulty in theory. In practice, though, human beings who say they are Muslims give Islam a bad image because of their errors and defects. And, frankly speaking, Islam does not need these types who are incapable of living up to the standard of the Prophet (ﷺ) when they have power and are seriously distorting the image of Islam when they do not have it.

Mushriks Tend Not to Be Humbled by Misfortune

This part of the developing discourse represents a Qur'anic show-down with the instinctual or visceral composition of the *mushriks*. The Qur'an raises the mirror so that they can see the consequences of their behavior against Allah (ﷻ). As they are shaken to the core of their real selves, all those pretenses with which they garnished themselves come tumbling down. With their vulnerabilities exposed, the *mushriks* are no longer able to recall their false gods and authorities; they awaken to the real God and ask Him for recovery and redemption.

- (6:40) Say, “Can you see yourselves invoking any but Allah when Allah’s chastisement befalls you [in this world], or the Last Hour comes upon you? [Tell me this], if you are men of truth!
- (6:41) “Nay, but it is Him alone that you will invoke — whereupon He may, if He so wills, remove the [ill] that caused you to call unto Him; and you will have forgotten all that to which you [now] ascribe divinity/authority side by side with Him.”
- (6:42) And, indeed, We sent Our messages to people before your time [O Prophet], and visited them with misfortune and hardship so that they might humble themselves:
- (6:43) Yet when the misfortune decreed by Us befell them, they did not humble themselves, but rather their hearts grew hard, for Satan had made all their doings seem goodly to them.
- (6:44) Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all [good] things, until — even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted — We suddenly took them to task; and lo! they were broken in spirit;
- (6:45) And [in the end], the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on evildoing was wiped out. For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمْ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ
 تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِلَٰهَ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ
 إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
 فَآخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
 بَأْسُنَا نَضَّرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ فَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا
 كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
 أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
 مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَقَطَّعَ دَابِرَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 ﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَمَّ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ مِّن
 إِلَٰهِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظَرَ كَيْفَ نَصَرَفُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ
 يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً
 هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا
 مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۗ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
 ﴿٤٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

- (6:46) Say, “What do you think? If Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts — what deity but Allah is here that could bring it all back to you?” Behold how many facets We give to Our messages — and yet they turn away in disdain!
- (6:47) Say, “Can you imagine what your condition will be if Allah’s chastisement befalls you, either suddenly or in a [gradually] perceptible manner? [But then], will any but evil-doing folk [ever] be destroyed?”
- (6:48) And We send [Our] message-bearers only as heralds of glad tidings and as warners; hence, all who commit [to Him] and live righteously, no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve;
- (6:49) Whereas those who give the lie to Our messages, suffering will afflict them in result of all their sinful doings (al-An‘ām:40–49).

As if playing a movie, Allah’s *āyāt* show the *mushriks* how their ideological ancestors were ruined. Eye-opening scenes give them a glimpse of how Allah’s social laws are at work and how His will flows through history. They are now privy to how they gradually got entangled in the awful condition they find themselves in, which ultimately was none other than their own doing because they objected to and opposed Allah’s envoys. They put themselves in a position to be exposed to one catastrophe after another, some repulsive and some tempting; over time they had become too “high and mighty” to recognize that catastrophes are timed to check obdurate human behavior, last chances at divine redemption as it were. But to no avail. Continuing on their course of deep denial until no opportunity was left for them, they finally exhausted the extent of Allah’s mercy on earth. Thinking that having control over resources and riches was proof of their privilege and rank, they could not be woken from their social stupor, even after calamities and disasters. Finally, in this moment, Allah’s will takes its course in a way they thought would never happen. They could not escape

the social laws of Allah (ﷻ) as adversities and accidents turned into sudden afflictions and unpredictable mayhem,

We suddenly took them to task: and lo! they were broken in spirit. And [in the end], the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on evildoing/injustice were wiped out. For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds (6:44–45).

Driving home the immensity of such a soul-staggering scene is the *mushriks*' finally experiencing Allah's (ﷻ) measure of stern justice as He deprives them of their hearing, sight, and even the very feelings in their hearts. At this asphyxiating moment in reality they by inherent aptitude turn to Him, whom they know to be the only One capable of restoring their perception to them.

These frames, as gripping as they are, nonetheless reinforce the divine reminders of history, and so the *mushriks* are brought up to date on the responsibilities and missions of prophets. Allah's Apostles (ﷺ) are the ones to come with good news and bad news, glad tidings and foreboding. They do not have a hidden agenda; they are not even required to produce miracles. And their certitude precludes them from bargaining for or bargaining away their convictions, principles, and values. They only carry and convey Allah's message. In doing so they have good news for some and bad news for others. In the process, there would have been those who committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ), doing what is right and hence moving on to better places and better times, sooner or later — with neither grief nor sorrow. On the other hand, there would have been those who disavowed the prophets, thus inviting upon themselves the pain and misery of affliction. The choice has always been left up to them; they may either commit to Allah or quit Him altogether. And this is how their destiny unfolds.

Man Intuitively Knows on Whom to Rely

Say, “Can you see yourselves invoking any but Allah when Allah’s chastisement befalls you [in this world], or the Last Hour comes upon you? [Tell me this], if you are men of truth! No, but it is Him alone you will invoke — whereupon He may, if He so wills, remove the [ill] that caused you to call unto Him; and you will have forgotten all that to which you [now] ascribe divinity/authority side by side with Him” (6:40–41).

These *āyāt* are speaking to human nature: how it reacts when there is no one around to cling to. When human beings are desperate and hopeless they intuitively and instinctively turn to Allah (ﷻ). There are times when man’s deep-seated feelings take over — impending death or torture, suffering of a loved one, ravages of war and dislocation, natural disasters — and the mind no longer has the time to think through things. Such times in human history and such moments in mortal life are enough to shake anyone down to his very psychological foundation. In the throes of these unnerving circumstances all of those verbal and theoretical cosmetics that used to ornament the facade of *shirk* are washed away. Human nature in its state of nature knows Allah as Sustainer and Allah as Authority; however, a staggering amount of man-made effort has gone into obscuring this fact. Here, Allah demonstrates that in man’s soul of souls he will cling to Allah when everything else fails,

Say, “Can you see yourselves appealing to any but Allah when Allah’s unfavorable judgement and punishment befalls you [in this world] or the Last Hour comes upon you? [Tell me this], if you are men of truth!” (6:40).

Suffice it to say here that when man is pressed by physical annihilation and he senses imminent doom, he turns to Allah (ﷻ) regardless of his official religion and however his denial of Allah

had been theorized. He cannot escape the fact that at moments of destiny and destruction, he knows who his Lord and Creator is,

[Say], “But it is Him alone you will appeal to — whereupon He may, if He so wills, remove that [ill/catastrophe] which caused you to appeal to Him; and you will have forgotten all that to which you [now] elevate to divinity/authority side by side with Him” (6:41).

When man is shaken in his substance and shocked in his essence he knows where to turn. Man calls on Allah, and only Allah — all other deities and authorities dissolve and disappear. At times like this, temporal deities-cum-authorities do not have a foothold in human nature and in human psychology. The shock and violent jarring of a doomsday-type upheaval close at hand are enough to realign man with his Creator. The yearning to just be rescued from a vortex of foreboding expectations brings out the real self — the self that knows only Allah can do that. This real and genuine self overrides the artificial and imposed “self” that fantasized God’s equivalents and stand-ins. The new alertness and higher consciousness reorders man’s behavior, fixating his mind on the reality and the truth — Allah (ﷻ).

It is an unflattering comment on human history that fast-approaching misfortunes are necessary to bring out the kernel of truth in man, that is, his acknowledgment of Allah’s unrivaled authority and His unmatched power. Be that as it may, when man is forced to rely on his inner self and turn to Allah (ﷻ) at times of gloom and doom, catastrophes and cataclysms, when man appeals to Allah and affirms in his heart of hearts no other power or authority, it is still Allah’s prerogative to respond positively (from man’s standpoint) or not. In this way, Allah states the fact about man’s innermost feelings and deepest thoughts. However, in spite of this time-honored human experience of people calling on God and beseeching His help when they find themselves in excruciating circumstances, a noisy class of people wants to pretend that all this is hogwash, that such people are either illiterate or brain-dead by culture and

religion, and that the only “rational” point of view is to deny the existence of God. To bolster their primarily empirical argument, they point to all the death, destruction, suffering, misery, and wretchedness endemic to human history, saying that if there was a merciful God, why did He not rescue his finest creation from such tragedies?

The fact to be absorbed here is that sane and rational social beings cannot in the nucleus of their own selves avow the nonexistence of God. The denial of the existence of God is a showy misrepresentation that has no firm roots in the gist of man and in the sum of life. Individuals who express a rejection of God and all He means through prophets and scriptures claim that the only rational approach about divine existence is one of skepticism. Their justification of atheism is often made on the grounds that some branch of science or psychology has rendered belief in God superfluous, or that experimental verification of religious belief is lacking.

This atheism has probably always been a part of human thought, albeit in a mode that has never gained popular acceptance or overwhelming adherence. Atheism had already emerged in ancient Greece, where Leucippus and Democritus taught that the final reality is “atoms and the void.” However, it is in modern times that atheism has become a major menace. It forms part of the official philosophy of Marxist countries and is also widespread in Western Judeo-Christian countries. Just as there have been many ideas and constructs of God, so too have there been many forms of atheism, depending on what particular god is being denied. This has led to some ambiguities. Both Socrates and some of the early Christians were charged with atheism because they were judged to have called in question the gods of classical religion, but they had their own belief in God and were certainly not “godless.”²⁸⁶

In a world where there are individuals and societies long adrift from a firm adherence to God there appears to be intermediate positions between a thoroughgoing atheism and a fully developed belief in God. There is even the possibility of a “religious atheism,” a view that denies any personal god or spiritual absolute, but retains a feeling of reverence for the universe. The rise of modern atheism parallels the rise of science from the Renaissance onward. It could

be said that atheism today has its roots in the European Renaissance. And so it would be appropriate at this point to take a look at an incubating period in world history when social consciousness was eager to run away from church and God into what finally evolved — in its rhetorical social theories — into a mental estrangement from God Almighty and His authority.²⁸⁷

The Euro-Judeo-Christian Renaissance should be called the *Renascita*, for it was thoroughly Italian in origin and inspiration. But the French, who took over in the 16th century as Europe's tastemakers, succeeded in imprinting their stamp on the Renaissance, a concept first mentioned by French novelist Honore de Balzac in the 19th century, and first developed in 1855 by the French historian Jules Michelet. Nevertheless, it was in Italy that, after the "long sleep" of the European Middle Ages, the classics of antiquity were rediscovered and studied, a body of knowledge and experience that the Italians considered their own particular heritage. After the angular and mannered Gothic (culturally primitive) period in the 12th and 13th centuries, scorned by Italians as *una maniera tedesca* (a German manner), the Renaissance sought to restore harmony, symmetry, and elegance of the classics, defining beauty as the perfect balance of all parts.²⁸⁸

The Italian Renaissance covers such an extended period and range of styles, from the still rather Gothic Giotto in the late-13th century to the early mannerist Michelangelo in the 16th, that scholars customarily divide it into more coherent subdivisions. The first of these is the *trecento* (short for *mil trecento*, or 1300, the 14th century), the infancy of the Renaissance, dominated by Giotto and the poet Petrarch. Then comes the *quattrocento* (*mil quattrocento*, 15th century), the adolescence of the Renaissance, characterized by naivete of artistic expression, as compared to the High Renaissance or *cinquecento* (16th century) when many of the great masterpieces in the history of European art were created.²⁸⁹

Between the three periods, there was a gradual transition, with much overlap, from medieval or Gothic sensibilities to those of the Renaissance; from a religious to a more secularized society; from the medieval emphasis on spirituality to the Renaissance

pleasure in physical beauty; from imitation and abidance to innovation, individualism, and sensation. A mortal sin in medieval times, individualism became a virtue in the Renaissance, possibly its fatal flaw.²⁹⁰

Humanism, considered by some the great philosophical movement of the Renaissance, also shifts focus from God to man — thereby inviting attack as godlessness. But although the Renaissance was not irreligious and certainly not agnostic, it was definitely worldly and church-averse. As an example of the new man-centered spirit in art — the premier Renaissance medium, that in which its most profound thought was invested — people had their portraits painted as their name saints, complete with emblems. The “great” Renaissance achievement in art was to effect a transition from medieval religious symbolism to naturalistic representation, from flat, silhouetted figures to the search for perfectly harmonious proportions and the illusion of depth created by a new system of visual organization called perspective. Themes remained largely Christian, if sometimes expressed in classical (pagan) forms. The preeminent Renaissance male figure was David, sometimes resembling Apollo (Sun God, god of prophesy, poetry, music, and healing); the female, the Virgin Mary (ﷺ). Christ was now represented as a serene, confident king, no longer the suffering medieval martyr. Nudity, which in earlier eras had been associated with shamelessness or poverty, became synonymous during the Renaissance with naturalism, simplicity, and honesty. Unwritten rules restricting the use of nudity in Christian subjects were cast aside in depictions of classical mythology. Finally, art became more dramatic and emphatic as extraneous characters and secondary incidents were pruned out, the better to focus on the heroic and sublime.²⁹¹

There are many highlighted names associated with the Renaissance. In the *trecento*, Giotto’s work in retrospect seems like a missing link between Byzantine iconography and High Renaissance classicism. The most important personality of the *quattrocento*, which was based in Florence (city in Italy) was the sculptor Donatello. A comparison of his and Michelangelo’s statues of David provides another object lesson in the development of the Renais-

sance: Donatello's David appears immature, a lovely boy in bronze, while Michelangelo's later *cinquecento* model is massive, tense, and self-consciously sexual. Another important artist of the *quattrocento* period was Botticelli with his slender, feminine figures, still virginal, compared to High Renaissance worldliness. *Quattrocento* portraits are realistic and descriptive, with simple homely touches and a childlike freshness. Finally, in the High or Late Renaissance, there are the "great geniuses," multi-talented ("Renaissance") men who cultivated learning and the social graces, and themselves aroused a cult of personality: the looming figures of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo, especially, has come to epitomize the "Renaissance man" for his eclectic interest in everything from anatomy to botany, geology, and aeronautics. Ironically, he was the least productive artistically and probably the most frustrated of the "great geniuses" of the era. His *Last Supper* is still considered by many the height of classical clarity, lucidity, and perfection, while his *Mona Lisa* seems to embody the riddle of the eternal feminine.²⁹²

In addition to subdividing the Renaissance by centuries, experts further identify regional variations. Artists in Tuscany (an Italian region) are said to have specialized in "painted drawings," highly linear, while the Venetians favored rich colors and *chiaroscuro* (a monochrome picture made by using several different shades of the same color) or *sfumato* (a gradual shading of light and dark), and the Sieneese (pertaining to Siena, a city in central Tuscany) were famous for richly decorated, somewhat Gothic art.²⁹³

In the field of architecture, the Renaissance has left hundreds of churches and palaces in the main Italian cities, plus the Palladian villas in the countryside, the first non-fortified country residences for nobility. The keystone of these various buildings was symmetry around a central point. Each floor level of an Italian Renaissance facade repeats some geometric motif, such as a Greek column (used purely as decoration) or style of window, varying by floor. The scale is simpler than Romanesque or Gothic, possibly more "human," and aesthetic qualities are optimized. Many Italian Renaissance architects, like Michelangelo, were also artists, with an artist's sensibility.²⁹⁴

Politically, Renaissance Italy was a collection of rival city-states ruled by a fascinating collection of enlightened princes, tyrants, and usurpers, many of them patrons of the arts. This was the era of Machiavelli and the Borgias (Italian aristocrats), when unbridled ambition, avarice, and sensuality reigned. In 1494, when the French invaded, Italy was easily defeated, its professional soldiers unaccustomed, it was said, to fighting battles in which people actually died. For the next 50 years Italy would be a battlefield, chiefly between France and Spain. By the time peace returned, Italy's political power was broken, although its cultural supremacy remained. For centuries, the themes of Italian Renaissance art would be copied and recopied, and the new standard of excellence replacing that of classical antiquity.²⁹⁵

By the 16th century the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance had spread all over Europe, taking root and flowering somewhat differently according to national soil and climate. Generations of scholars and artists traveled to Italy as the fountain of creativity, and a taste for Renaissance luxuries was also carried home by armies that fought there. Francois, the king of France, collected Renaissance art and even invited Leonardo da Vinci to one of his castles on the Loire, where the great artist died. These castles, by the way, are in French Renaissance style, more ornate and varied than the strictly symmetrical Italian palazzo (palace).²⁹⁶

In France and Italy the Renaissance was an elite affair of king and nobility, but in Germany and Holland it was adopted by the bourgeoisie. As a result, what is called Renaissance architecture in these countries, chiefly town houses of prosperous *burghers* (middle class citizens), bears little resemblance to Italian models. In their Renaissance art, too, the northern Europeans retained many more late Gothic elements. Of several great German Renaissance artists, only Albrecht Durer achieved Italian standards of perspective (he also painted his self-portrait as Christ) but was never at ease painting nudes.²⁹⁷

It is this culture and mindset that germinated a “distant God.” This all bourgeoned a modern science, which incorporates what has sometimes been called a methodological atheism; that is to say,

it seeks to explain events within the world in terms of other events within the world, without appeal to any higher power and authority beyond man's laboratory life, such as God. Among the early scientists, a few inexplicable phenomena were still ascribed to divine intervention, but increasingly it was seen that the ideal of science must be to treat the world of nature as a self-regulating system to be explained on immanent (within the mind) principles. This point of view was just about universal among educated people until the "religious awakening" that began with the Muslims of the world reasserting their Islamic identity — a process that is still in its early stages, and a movement that has not coalesced to its optimum, and a turn in human history that still has not crested with its mental and scientific potential.

Atheism as a European Renaissance product of sorts has gone beyond a methodological assumption, and throughout the 19th century the atheistic critique was extended to all forms of theistic religion. In this secular bewilderment God may be explained as a projection of human ideals or even of the human father (Feuerbach and Freud). The 18th-century European "Enlightenment" was a time of rationalism, or to be more detailed, it was a time in which the Europeans carried their minds out of their churches, and one far reaching consequence of this was the undermining of Christian faith among the educated classes. This effect was unintended because the project of many Enlightenment philosophers was to prove the existence of God using reason. For example, the Frenchman Rene Descartes (1596–1650) and the German Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) were convinced that God's existence could be shown by reason to be necessary.²⁹⁸

Philosophers of the late-18th century, such as the German Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), continued this struggle to justify faith in God in terms of human reason. But in the 19th century, writers began to argue that logical thought was no help in debating God's existence and examining faith. The Dane Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and the German Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) took opposite positions. Kierkegaard studied theology and, although opposed to much organized Christianity, was a committed religious

thinker. He argued that people should embrace God even if rationally it seemed an absurdity. Nietzsche was determinedly anti-Christian and therefore proclaimed that it was time for people to create a new mode of being, with human creativity rather than God at its center.²⁹⁹

For the German philosophers Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) and Karl Marx (1818–1883), religion was a projection of the human essence onto an ideal; they argued that, far from being the creator of man, God is man's own creation — no more than an invention of human consciousness. Marx also believed that religion was part of an ideology that encouraged the oppressed to accept their fate. He wrote, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."³⁰⁰

Friedrich Nietzsche argued that the concept of God is a human creation, and that once man becomes aware of that fact, he can no longer base his religious and moral beliefs on any notion of a divine external reality. "God is dead," he proclaimed; the time had come for people to create a new set of values. In many ways this argument was the inevitable conclusion of an increasing anthropocentrism (an inclination to evaluate reality exclusively in terms of human values) — placing man at the center of the world — that had been implicit in philosophy since the work of Kant. If man views his existence through human categories, then his concept of God must itself be a human creation.³⁰¹

The French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) accepted God's death! Much of his writing was an attempt to look at the human condition in a world without a prime mover who could have provided a basis and structure for the understanding of being. Anglo-American analytic philosophers of the 20th century have tended to agree that philosophy may help us clarify religious concepts, without giving us a secure foundation for religious belief.³⁰²

In the era when Rene Descartes was arguing that the workings of human reason revealed God's existence, the French mathematician, Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), took an entirely practical approach.

He argued that, on the basis of probabilities, it would be foolish to live as if God did not exist. Pascal's proposition was that God either exists or He does not. If we believe in God and He exists, we will be rewarded with eternal bliss in heaven; if we believe in God and He does not exist, then at worst all we have forgone is sinful pleasure. If we do not believe in God and He does exist, we may enjoy a few sinful pleasures — but we face eternal damnation. If we do not believe in God and He does not exist, our sins will not be punished. Would any rational gambler think that the experience of a few sinful pleasures is worth the risk of damnation?³⁰³

In the 18th century, Immanuel Kant tried to show how philosophy could prove the existence of God. However, his other work showed that people cannot know reality directly as a “thing in itself”; what is real in and of itself is beyond human experience, that is, even if God exists, people cannot know Him. Kant thought that a Christian could have faith in God, and that this faith would be consonant with reason. Given that human beings have the autonomy to create moral values, it would not be irrational to believe in a God who gives purpose to the moral realm.³⁰⁴

Kant's countryman Georg Hegel (1770–1831) thought that the God of religion is an intuition of absolute spirit, or Geist. Hegel's Geist is not like the God of Christianity, traditionally considered to be transcendent, outside human consciousness. For Hegel, God is immanent and, since history is the process of Geist coming to know itself, we are all part of Geist — or God. Soren Kierkegaard believed that reason has no place in faith since God is beyond reason. He did not think that it is rational to believe in God — but a person should have faith in God anyway!³⁰⁵

In further readings of Marx and his followers religion might be accounted for as a byproduct of social and economic conditions. The idea of a transcendent God was held to be an obstacle to human freedom and transcendence, and it was pointed out that the human condition had been improved by science and human effort rather than by reliance on God (Nietzsche and Sartre). These intellectual arguments for atheism combined with certain emotional feelings of rebellion against God. For some, the sheer evil and in-

justice of much that goes on in the world seemed a disproof of God’s existence and called for “metaphysical rebellion” (Camus). It cannot be denied that in the European context many points in the atheistic critique have in fact touched on weaknesses and distortions in the ways people have thought about God and call for a radical rethinking of the concept of God.³⁰⁶

Yet atheism is far from having established its case. It seems highly improbable that our universe owes its origin to a “chance collocation of atoms.” The crude materialism on which 19th-century atheism was based has long since been discredited. There are many traditional “proofs” for the existence of God, but three are particularly noteworthy. The first is known as the argument from design. Philosophers using this argument suggest that the intricate mechanisms of the universe, from the orbits of the planets around the Sun to the arrangement of cells in the human liver and lungs, could not have developed simply by chance. They must have been designed — and the being that designed them is God. The second is known as the ontological argument. Philosophers using this argument propose that God is the perfect being and that, if He lacked existence, He would not be perfect, therefore He must exist. The third proof of God’s existence is known as the cosmological argument. Its supporters say that everything in existence has a cause, but that there must at some time have been a cause prior to all other causes. This “prime mover” or “first cause” is necessary to explain existence — and that first cause is God.³⁰⁷

The ebb and flow of atheism in the materialistic and secular world is symptomatic of subjecting human nature to wild ideas, oppressive social and economic conditions, and a general climate of injustice and tyranny. This writer cannot for one moment concede the possibility that a human being and a social being, endowed with all his rational capacities, can spurn his Creator given the fact that the very act of creation involved the engagement of Allah (ﷻ),

And lo! Your Sustainer said to the angels, “Behold, I am about to create mortal man out of sounding clay, out of dark slime transmuted; and when I have formed

him fully and breathed into him of My *rūḥ*, fall down before him in prostration!” (15:28–29);

He governs all that exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend unto Him [for judgement] on a Day the length whereof will be [like] a thousand years of your reckoning. Such is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind: the Almighty, the Dispenser of Grace, who makes most excellent everything He creates. Thus, He begins the creation of man out of clay; then He causes him to be begotten out of the essence of a humble fluid; and then He forms him in accordance with what he is meant to be, and breathes into him of His *rūḥ*; and [thus, O men], He endows you with hearing, and sight, and feelings as well as minds: [yet] how seldom are you grateful! (32:5–9);

[For], lo, your Sustainer said to the angels, “Behold, I am about to create a human being out of clay; and when I have formed him fully and breathed into him of My *rūḥ*, fall you down before him in prostration!” Thereupon the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together (38:71–73);

“...whereupon We blew into him [man] of our *rūḥ*” (66:12).

The deep imprint of the Creator exists in every human-cum-social being. Unfortunately — and this speaks to the absence of Muslim engagement in the public space — the effects of political tyranny and economic victimization as well as social discrimination and religious bigotry have numbed this sense of God-recognition inside people, who are otherwise cognizant of God and subject to His authority.

Europe produced for itself and for the rest of the world a terrible conflict first with the church, then with religion, and then with God Himself. It was a dictatorial church and its ivory-tower clergymen that gave the pre-existing European class structure “divine” authorization and justification, despite the fact that the scripture presented to Jesus (ﷺ) was meant to liberate people from class (and caste) prioritization. The polarization between the upper-class hierarchy of clergymen belonging to the church and the lower-class population belonging to the agony and misery of everyday life in the fields or in assembly lines — a spiritual gloss over the cosmetic substitution of popes for kings (the elect) and reprobates for commoners (the damned) — catalyzed the European psychology to break free from what it thought to be the cause of its misery. But what started as a renegade attitude of animosity toward Christianity ended with a rejection of all religion in general, throwing the baby out with the bathwater, as it were.

The European colonialists, throttled by the sprawl of empire, the “war economies” (massive “defense” spending on armies and colonization personnel) needed to maintain it, and the restlessness of the natives, threw the ball to their heirs, the Zionists and imperialists (Israel and America). For the better part of the last 70 years, both have been deftly exploiting this mass exodus away from religious oppression and “Christian” doctrines that are incompatible with human nature and civilized behavior. Within this mix of manipulation and secular seduction, Zionist Jews in particular appear to have taken some odd satisfaction in Christians progressively doubting their religion or vociferously rebelling against God and scripture. The Yahūdī impulse to get even with the *goyim*, a tendency described at length in the Talmud and the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, could possibly explain this depraved gleefulness on their part. Is it mere coincidence for the Yahūd to have been active in the theories and ideologies that cast aside God and His authority in the life of humanity?³⁰⁸ One day in the not-too-distant future, as the Islamic persona becomes more assertive in the public domain, the truth will surface about how the Yahūd took a leading role in steering the economically discontented and reli-

giously inadequate populations of Europe away from religion and into the obscurities of materialism, secularism, and atheism.

Emerging from almost a century of official atheism and repressive communism, the peoples and populations of Europe are demonstrating that in their heart of hearts, there is an inclination toward God. The information they have about Him may be inaccurate, but the fact is that their internal and intuitive selves pine for the recognition and affirmation of God. When the masses of people and continents of land in the world were finally rid of atheism at the political, ideological, and institutional levels, a giant sigh of relief was heard from their societies. Not to get carried away, though, this relief will turn into suffocation again if these same people refuse to find the One God whose authority is supreme and whose words are mercy.

The Qur'an Liberates History from Human Bias

And, indeed, We sent [Our messages] to unions of people before you [O Prophet], and visited them with severity and tribulation so that they might humble themselves; yet when the severity decreed by Us happened upon them, they did not humble themselves, but rather their hearts hardened, for Satan had made all their doings seem charming to them. Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all [good] things, until — even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted — We abruptly took them to task: and lo! they were broken in spirit; and [in the end], the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on maleficence was wiped out. For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds (6:42–45).

On the face of it, this lesson starts with Allah's (ﷻ) rigor in baselining history as a chronicle of reality governed by incontro-

vertible social laws (*sunan*). Note that this is not about personalities and their desire to figure prominently for posterity, temporal events, or even ideas; rather it is about causes, that is, why societies, civilizations, and *ummaḥs* thrive, and why conversely they take a nosedive. It explains how people set themselves up to eventually come across the severity of Allah and the consequences of slighting Him. It shows how Allah gives peoples and communities, countries and societies one opportunity after another in a succession of divine warnings. But, even then, if they choose to dismiss Allah from their public mind and fail to connect with His reminders, when they do not respond to Allah through hard times and are not stimulated to Him through good times, then they prove that their conscience, moral compass, and God-given nature have gone awry. They reach, because of their own social projects and future plans, the limit of possible redemption. In other words their life no longer offers a promise for a better future. At that terminating moment Allah's (ﷻ) word materializes, and their social order becomes a disorder, their lives are turned upside down, and their materialistic lifestyle is ruined with all its physical and social surroundings,

And We sent [messengers and messages] to nations before you [O Muhammad]. Then We took them in by means of severity and scathe in the hope they will humble themselves. Trusting that when Our severity comes to them they will [still] not humble themselves, instead making their hearts yet harder, for Satan made it appear as if their works were wonderful (6:42–43).

Human earthly existence attests to many such nations and countries. The Qur'an is full of narratives of societal construction and civilizational destruction. This is the fact of life and society, regardless of the way history has been written by conquerors or presented by governments. The human foray into recording history pales in significance, in more ways than one, when measured with the range of history covered by the Qur'an. Man's own register of cultural history, economic history, ethno-history, oral history, or

social history is both feeble and trivial in the presence of the Qur'anic registry of history, which is still untainted by man's biases and inaccuracies.

Man-made and man-recorded history, as short as it is, has never been free of myriad fabrications and gross misinterpretations. "Mainstream" human history as it exists today has been "commissioned" — by the dominant temporal power elite of the day — in the form of endowments set aside for scribes (today's think tanks and universities) whose task is to launder and burnish the image of their power patrons, hence by accepting the former's welfare or largesse, the latter are under pressure to leave out or add factors and considerations that feed into a particular event, a specific development, or a well-known occasion. Therefore, history becomes a varnished and sanitized chronicle of the doings and goings-on of the people in power at the time.

Unmentioned, unrecorded, or deliberately omitted elements in history have had to do with deep psychological, political, social, and even personal considerations. In reading through historical affairs, one is often shocked by the superficial points of view, the staggering discriminatory biases, the missing "fine print," and the constant intrusion of a "normalizing" or essentializing narrative that is used to not only justify the power position, and thereby superiority, of the writers, but also to measure the deficient humanity, and thereby inferiority, of those who have been conquered and debased. Leaving aside their own predilections, preconceptions, and prejudices for a moment, the information compiled by historians to reconstruct an ancient or not-so-ancient event cannot encompass all the specifics that went into the making of the event. To compound the problem, this incomplete historical record is frequently put together in an inaccurate or erroneous manner. Even the decision to leave something in, exclude another thing, or "patch-up" a hole cannot be decoupled from human bias, socialization, and ultimately character.

One may think that in the Information Age, with all kinds of information coming from multiple points of view, it is possible to synthesize a singular dispassionate narrative of history. However,

multiple sources of information also provide myriad opportunities to create mischief, and hence any “idiot on a soapbox” can go public with his rants and reality distortion — to such an extent that the old adage of “don’t believe everything you hear” has morphed into “don’t trust everything (or anything) on the internet.” To give this some context, the reader is advised to consider and compare the competing narratives of 9/11, the official (government) one and the one coming out of the Truth Movement, often dismissed by the power culture and its house media organs as conspiracy theories.³⁰⁹ When this event suffers the ravages of history, as all events will, and people are reading about it 200 years from now, the version they will probably be reading is the one that now has power and money behind it, while the unofficial one will be relegated to a few books gathering dust on a library shelf, available for the use of, get this, historians. This, of course is expected to be the case if, firstly, the United States retains its political, military, and financial dominance (not a guarantee) and is not conquered by its temporal rivals for power; and, secondly, the Muslims do not get their act together and bring some much-needed integrity to the public space. To find a way through all of this fog, now more than ever, people — Muslims and non-Muslims alike — are in need of the Qur’an and its impartial narrative.

In our time, contributors to the distortion of incidents and episodes that will become a matter of history for future generations dominate the airwaves and frequencies of the public domain. The news media and other mass-media manipulators concoct for the blank slates of posterity their own blinkered view of “reality.” The media distorts and the public abides. The media makes molehills out of mountains and vice-versa. The public has not a clue about what the media knows and what it does to shape, condition, and manipulate the behavior of its consumers; for instance, to them, only telling a small part of the truth is not necessarily lying, or “scientific” polling is an accurate predictor of actual outcomes. Those who are on a daily hamster wheel for bread and butter do not have the luxury or leisure to sort out the “official version” from what really happened. It takes a keen observer to realize that there is and

has always been “social fabrication.” History is written through a process of socialized amnesia. The power of information managers is so great that they can virtually move individuals to kill people simply because the drumbeat of an article tells them to do so. In all of this, the big picture is hard to come by.

At the end of day, people are led to believe that the information they get from hundreds and thousands of years ago and the up-to-the-minute information from the now is a product of science, a product of direct or intuitive observation. The notion being projected is that there is an air of incontrovertibility about information gathered through the “scientific method.” By relying on this whole body of false knowledge and distorted facts, ideologues, theoreticians, philosophers, and intellectuals embark on predicting the course of events. And here, man commits a grave and deadly error as he registers incomplete events, projects inaccurate developments, and writes incorrect history, thinking that this will lead to precise projections and liberating social models for future generations. The minds, hearts, and lives of many people have become ensnared in this lie. The arrogance cloaked within the “scientific method” is so formidable that its purveyors have become inured to speaking in terms of inevitabilities and certainties.

People often expect the social sciences (political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, history) to be subject to the kind of laws that apply to the physical sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, botany). They do so, not because this is natural, but rather because they have been socialized to think this way by the powers that be, hence the so-called “laws of economics” (the law of supply and demand, the law of wages, etc). Though certain physical laws may be triggered by human activity, they are generally independent of human control and human intervention; they will work the same way regardless of what man does, requiring only the repeatability of certain conditions (temperature, pressure, and the like). Social laws, on the other hand, have been calibrated to work with human nature, and hence their application depends on what people do, especially in relation to whether or not their behavior is principled. When collective human nature gravitates toward its ugliness and

self-possession, then it inevitably petitions the exercise of destructive social laws; conversely, ennobling social laws take over when man elevates his nature to do what is right and just.

What is important to note here is that while definitions and causal physical (natural) relationships may suffice for physical laws, they are wholly inadequate when human activity enters into the mix. Human behavior is disposed more to criteria, standards by which something may be judged, especially those that distinguish right from wrong, than to definitions and the binary simplicity of cause and effect. Criteria are to man as definitions and causalities are to natural laws. Always preceding the cause ought to be a moral consideration that rules over the impulse to act a certain way, and the effects are inevitably related to those fundamental (moral) choices. It is this criterion that is critical to how certain social laws become active in the life of man. The secular West, with its industrial and technological bases and applied sciences, has reached admirable heights in its inventions and discoveries; however its capacity for moral discernment before it acts in the social milieu has left much to be desired in the development of its social sciences, either in theory or in practice. Functioning in strictly an empirical way, it wants to impetuously own (privatize) the cause, but not responsibly own up to the effect of acting without any moral constraints, which it expects to leave (socialize) to the future generations of the deprived other to sort through.

Here is where thinking men and women should come for information about social laws and social facts. In this God-revealed Book is accurate and correct information about the past and the “why” pertaining to that past. Allah (ﷻ) discloses herein how His social laws work; He does so because He wants man to be with Him and not on destructive paths ending in inescapable quagmires. All men need to equip themselves with this valuable information, learn from the mistakes of others, and appreciate what they have in this Sourcebook. There is more to recorded history than meets the eye; and so the Qur’an takes the reader beyond the outward aspects of history into the real considerations behind the issues. From this authentic narrative, man is the one to gain a healthier, a fuller, and a

non-biased presentation of information and facts. In light of this unshakeable truth about social laws, he begins to develop a sense of what may or may not happen if such and such a society does or does not honor Allah's social laws (*sunan*).

This lesson moves effortlessly from one nation and commonwealth to another as they rise and fall. These extended social groupings were the milieu in which certain prophets were active in the course of human history. Prophets who were commissioned to speak to their people and to explain Allah's word and will, were born into such associations of people, all of whom shared a similar set of characteristics, key among which were their desire to turn against Allah and take issue with His emissaries. But what they did not realize is that they were creating the ripe conditions for Allah's social law to "kick in." Ultimately each peculiar, prophet-defecting society became the object of natural crises and social catastrophes. Its institutions came tumbling down and its citizens lost their sense of security. It had to endure distress and suffer emotionally. This social law takes effect only after a dispatched prophet or his followers trigger it by doing what they are told by Allah (ﷻ). It will never go into effect if the followers of prophets just sit back, enjoy their rituals, and spare themselves the social estrangement that will inevitably occur when they engage their own cultures and societies. In one demonstration of this lesson in human history, the flowing Qur'an mentions an instance in which Mūsá (ﷺ) stands in disagreement with the Pharaoh and his fashionable elite, while the latter's people have to suffer through tribulations and severities as a result,

And most certainly did We overwhelm Pharaoh's people with drought and scarcity of fruits, so that they might take it to heart. But whenever good fortune alighted upon them, they would say, "This is [but] our due"; and whenever affliction befell them, they would blame their evil fortune on Moses and those who followed him. Oh, verily, their [evil] fortune had been decreed by Allah — but most of them knew it not. And they said [to Moses], "Whatever sign you may produce

before us in order to cast a spell upon us thereby, we shall not believe you!” Thereupon We let loose upon them floods, and [plagues of] locusts, and lice, and frogs, and [water turning into] blood — distinct signs [of Our power] — but they gloried in their arrogance, for they were people lost in [criminal] sin (7:130–133).

The social dynamic that escapes official and mainstream historicism is that societies are subject to trials and harshness so that they may reconsider and change their social direction. In such a manner does Allah (ﷻ) endeavor to rescue them from the abyss. Allah’s attempts to shake them through disaster and misfortune, in an effort to revive their sense of virtue and rectitude, is an expression of His grace. Through such “instabilities” it is hoped that such societies will reevaluate their course of action as well as their position vis-à-vis Allah, that wayward societies who are established in their own God-forsaken ways orient themselves toward Allah and call upon Him as authority and lord. Allah wants them to see the light and to beseech Him so that He may come to their rescue, delivering them from their self-imposed hard times. Unfortunately, the divine narrative of history, which is also attested to by the human narrative of history, says that these particular societies did not respond; they did not do what was expected of them. Trials and tribulations did not raise their awareness. They seemed to be on a blind course, motivated by ego and aggression. Their “standard” response to prophets was that even if they were to produce myriad demonstrations of extraordinary feats and supernatural events or any other awe-inspiring deeds, they still would never commit to God. But they had fallen under the spell of Satan who deluded them into believing that their methods, ways, and direction was commendable and meritorious, **“But their hearts turned rocky, and Satan prettified for them what they were doing.”**

Human beings who do not respond to and learn from hard times and hardships are the ones whose hearts have calcified. They no longer have the sensitivity to “pick up” on why catastrophic or cataclysmic events occur. Only a dead heart can no longer be stim-

ulated by recurrent turbulent conditions. Allah (ﷻ) is intent on having these people wake up but their sensory system appears to be lifeless. He wants to open for them the doors of His grace and mercy, but they do not want to cooperate. Inevitably therefore, the social law triggers physical laws that have psychological consequences, in this case, negative and self-defeating.

These societies that were mentioned to Muhammad (ﷺ) and his followers were not exempt from Allah's (ﷻ) social law and its attending natural upheavals. Obviously, they did not turn to Him for advice or for recovery from loss and injury. With measurable hubris and antipathy, they continued to revel in the false sense of security inspired by Satan. And so, at this juncture, they were now ready for another social law — being exposed to good and prosperous times — to come into effect,

Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all [good] things, until — even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted — We quickly took them to task: and lo! they were broken in spirit; and [in the end], the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on criminal injustice was wiped out. For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds (6:44–45).

Good times, prosperity, and tears of joy — like bad times, deprivation, and tears of pain — are forms of *ibtīlā'* (emancipation through tribulation), though of a higher rank. A committed Muslim, on the individual level, is also exposed from time to time to these currents in life. But regardless of what condition he finds himself in, his attitude is consistent: in deprivation he is patient and in prosperity he is appreciative. Thus he always comes out winning. Obedient and disobedient people both, and equally so, are subject to this spectrum of *ibtīlā'*. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) is reported to have said,

*A mu‘min’s affair is astounding! His affair — all of it — is beneficial. This can only happen to a mu‘min. If he is bequeathed with a gratifying bounty he is thankful and [the result of this gratitude] is to his benefit [in the long run]; and if he is consigned harm and hardship he is patient and [the result of this patience] is to his benefit [in the long run].*³¹⁰

This narrative describes, collectively, those nations that turned their backs to God by defying and denying Him. When trials and tribulations, calculated by Allah, could not awaken them from their oblivion, they were gradually lulled into good times, pleasure and leisure, economic prosperity, and higher standards of living. Allah (ﷻ) opened up to them the floodgates of affluence, opulence, luxury, and merriment. The Qur’anic verbatim, “**Fataḥnā ‘alayhim abwāba kulli shay’**: We opened up for them access to everything...,” gives the impression of copiousness and quantities at a cascading pace. These societies in opposition to God were getting everything they wanted and more; and so they began consuming as if there would be no tomorrow. In today’s language, this *āyah* is describing affluent consumer societies. Given that overconsumption and consumerism are characteristics of societies courting self-destruction and annihilation as a matter of social laws placed into existence by the Lawgiver, it would be prudent at this point to take a closer look at such a society on the edge.

For beginners, consumption is the meaningful use people make of the objects they are associated with. The use can be mental or material; the objects can be things, ideas, or relationships; and the association can range from ownership to contemplation. This definition is broad and vague because anthropologists have been less concerned with defining their own approach to consumption than with rejecting two previous approaches, those of conventional economics and Marxian political economy. Researchers criticize these approaches for ignoring the social and cultural processes that underlie needs, generate demand, and are satisfied in consumption. While some social scientists in the West recognize that a number of needs has a material basis, they stress the fact that need and de-

mand reflect the ways objects facilitate social relationships and define social identities.³¹¹

Social science scholars have long reflected on the meaningful use of objects. Max Weber and Thorstein Veblen are two examples from around the beginning of the 20th century. Despite this history, the systematic social study of consumption is relatively recent, being overshadowed by the study of social organization and production. Social science encyclopedias of the mid-1980s could still discuss consumption solely in economic terms.³¹²

One key concern of students of consumption is the way that objects carry significant social meanings. Just about all objects have always carried such meanings to a degree. However, many argue that these meanings became especially pronounced in the West around the time of the rise of capitalism and mass production, so much so that the West became a consumer society. This period saw a change in the way Westerners thought about objects, as the symbolic gratifications of consumption loomed larger in people's minds. This change was facilitated and exploited by commercial firms, themselves growing larger and more aggressive. Prominent among these were retail merchants, who were beginning to place their wares in novel and exotic displays in order to generate sales. This was especially true of department stores, the retail merchants who have attracted the greatest scholarly attention.³¹³

For individuals, the first step in consumption is appropriation, establishing a mental association with the objects to be consumed. In capitalist societies, this means that individuals transform objects from being impersonal commodities into things with distinctive meanings for the consumers and distinct places in the consumers' social lives. Once appropriated, people can use the objects to define their place in different social units. For example, the clothes one wears can be important for defining one's gender, social rank, ethnic identity, and a host of other social attributes. Less obviously, when and how one eats can be important for defining social cycles of time, whether time of day, season of the year, or ritual cycles. The cumulative effect of these individual acts of definition is a common structure of consumption at the societal level. This struc-

ture of consumption in turn reflects and recreates the identities of social groups that consume in distinctive ways, as well as the differences between those groups.³¹⁴

Students in Western societies tend to focus on the way that consumption creates the distinction between different entities like classes or ethnic groups, probably because mass consumption is so established in the West. On the other hand, mass consumption in the “Third World” is relatively new, and research there tends to focus on the way consumption creates novel social identities and entities. Many assert that the spread of Western consumables into Third-World countries does not, as some had argued and feared, lead to homogeneous westernization. Instead, it leads to the creation of national hybrids. These hybrids consist of interpretations and adaptations of Western products developed and shared by indigenous people themselves. Such hybrids can generate common national consumption communities that displace preexisting sub-national or colonial patterns, and so are important in creating the nation itself as a social and cultural entity. Equally, those national patterns can become self-sustaining. This can happen when fringe groups within the country adopt national consumption patterns in order to assert their membership in the emerging nation, a process that increases the importance of those national consumption patterns.³¹⁵

As the study of consumption matures it will need to address two issues. One is the denotation of *consumption* itself, which seems at times to mean little more than *not production*. This broad, vague, implicit definition is fertile, but is unlikely to help scholars develop a coherent view of the subject. The other issue is more complex. At present researchers tend to investigate the ways people impose meaning on the objects in their lives. However, many such objects come with complex structures of meaning already in them, such as music and television, or already attached to them through advertising and global cultural imagery, such as soda drinks and sports goods. If they are to develop a comprehensive account of consumption, scholars will need to address ways that these preexisting meanings affect those who consume the objects that carry them.³¹⁶

Post-industrial societies tend to fall into the leisure trap. The Qur'an captures them in these words, **"...even as they have reveled in what they have been given..."** To bolster the *āyah*, they can be seen drowning in their luxuries, dipping into their lusts, and indulging their sensual gratifications. At this point they express no appreciation or devotion. Long gone from Allah (ﷻ), they relish their "goodies" and enjoy to excess whatever fun comes their way. This is when social cohesion begins to come apart. These are the times in the lives of societies when discipline disintegrates and a breakdown of law and order occurs. As this level of dysfunction draws in all of society, reaching its climax, nothing is left other than the invalidation and liquidation of that type of social order, **"We promptly took them to task, and lo! they were broken in spirit."** Society may have been in a grand orgy; it may have been intoxicated beyond sobriety. But at some point along its drift away from Allah, it will reach its natural and logical end, **"And [in the end], the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on evil-doing was wiped out."**

The description above represents what can be called a *mushrik* society — an oppressive and offensive society. Societies that establish and institutionalize any authority except Allah's will eventually end up participating in their own demise, **"For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds."** Dedicated and duty-bound Muslims do not celebrate the door of Allah's mercy closing upon anyone; rather they are saddened when people who were once created with dignity suffer this fate. However, at such a time, they can be thankful that a God-denying society has ceased to exist and that the planet has been cleansed of those who defied Allah's (ﷻ) authority and power.

Where is the society of Nūḥ? The society of Hūd? The society of Šāliḥ? And the society of Lūṭ (ﷻ)? They all succumbed to Allah's *sunnah* and are long gone, just as was the case with the Pharaohs, the Greeks, the Romans, and others who could not escape this social law. They all had modernities and civilizations, but ultimately, they all self-destructed with only a faint memory left in history books.

All things considered and with an eye on proportionality the civilizations of ancient history were as advanced, sophisticated, and urbane as the civilizations in our time. From reading the Qur'an, it is known that in the time of Sulaymān (ﷺ) a technology of sorts was utilized to bring the Queen of Sheba's throne from hundreds of miles away in a matter of seconds, if not less — something “modern” technology is incapable of doing. The point to ponder here concerns what civilizations do that causes them to vanish. Is it moral decay? Is it economic insolvency? Is it crushing wars from common enemies? Or is it something else? Social scientists can argue endlessly for one point or the other, but the Qur'an is neither the work of a social scientist nor the product of a committee of social scientists. This is the word of Allah (ﷻ) and He tells man that civilizations fail when they deliberately and systematically omit the authority and power of Allah from their internal selves, from their public mind, and from their living conscience. Allah in His mercy gives them chances, but once things are set in motion, there is no stopping Allah's *sunan* from taking their course, and these societies will come crashing down without any hope of return. To be certain, during the interim, symptoms of this deviation and decay — racism, classism, extreme poverty and extreme wealth simultaneously, etc. — will surface, and the experts and the analysts will try out their quick fixes and long-term solutions. But unless they are prescient enough to address the underlying cause — their dishonoring Allah by denying His messages — they will continue on the path of infamy and invalidation.

If today's Muslims were tracking the meanings of this Qur'an and measuring the real world they live in, they would not be able to escape some pertinent illustrations of this *āyah*,

...steady-going as they were rejoicing in what they had been given, We all of a sudden took them away, and lo! they were temperamentally impoverished; and [in the end], the last remnant of those evildoing folks was eliminated. For all praise is due to Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds (6:44–45).

Allah's (ﷻ) punishment, retribution, and affliction only comes when it is due. Nations and societies living in a deluge of wealth and fortune, generally for use of only a few, will have to realize that they are on the verge of collapse and obliteration. Humanity from time to time has had its experience with such high-tide and heyday societies. Materialistic societies had better think again when they believe their economic "progress" has reached heights never seen before. Those who traverse the meanings of this Qur'an should not be fooled when they see wealth and riches inundating a society, plenty of money going around, and standards of living reaching an all-time high. Allah advises the Muslims to take a closer look at such "flourishing" and "thriving" societies when they are in denial of Him, taking life as they wish with little reference to His higher authority.

The backbone of any civilization is man himself. When the quality of the individual deteriorates, the civilization he is part of begins to disintegrate. No amount of money or wealth can be thrown at this problem to improve the essential attribute, the degree, the grade of excellence, or the worth of such individuals. In our time, consider the affluent and booming societies in Europe and America, in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. While their accumulated wealth is at an all-time high, their social morality and responsibility is at an all-time low. This polarity has given those societies disproportionate numbers of individuals failing on the moral and conscience scale. Mental disorders and mental illnesses, which would otherwise be almost unheard of in God-conscious societies, at least to the extent that they debilitate secular materialistic societies, abound.

Mental illness is considered to be the abnormal working of the mind. Since normal working cannot easily be defined, the borderline between mild mental illness and normality is a matter of opinion. Mild forms of mental illness are known as *neuroses*, affecting the emotions, whereas more severe forms, *psychoses*, distort conscious reasoning. Neurosis, a general term in psychology, refers to emotional disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and obsession. The main disturbance tends to be one of mood; contact with reality is relatively unaffected, in contrast to the effects of psychosis.

Psychotic disorder, or psychosis, is a general term for a serious mental disorder where the individual commonly loses contact with reality and may experience hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that do not exist) or delusions (fixed false beliefs). For example, in a paranoid psychosis, an individual may believe that others are plotting against him. A major type of psychosis is schizophrenia, which may be biochemically induced.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) study of 14 countries — Belgium, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain, Ukraine and the United States — mental illnesses including anxiety disorders and depression are common and under-treated in many developed and developing countries, with the highest rate found in the United States, which is considered to be the most advanced social order in the world and in history.³¹⁷ The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) corroborates this with more detail,

The economic burden of mental illness in the United States is substantial — about \$300 billion in 2002. Mental illness is also associated with chronic medical diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. According to the World Health Organization, mental illness results in more disability in developed countries than any other group of illnesses, including cancer and heart disease. Other published studies report that about 25% of all US adults have a mental illness and that nearly 50% of US adults will develop at least one mental illness during their lifetime.³¹⁸

Yet more data, compiled by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), indicates that every year, about 42.5 million American adults (or 18.2% of the total adult population in the United States) suffer from some mental illness, enduring conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. Approximately 9.3 million adults, or about 4% of

those Americans ages 18 and up, experience “serious mental illness,” that is, their condition impedes day-to-day activities, such as going to work.³¹⁹ Finally, listen to what Bruce E. Levine of *Alternet* says in his article, “Living in America will drive you insane — literally,”

Data suggests the US is experiencing an epidemic of crippling mental illness. We may have only ourselves to blame. In “The Epidemic of Mental Illness: Why?” (*New York Review of Books*, 2011), Marcia Angell, former editor-in-chief of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, discusses over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, pathologizing of normal behaviors, Big Pharma corruption of psychiatry, and the adverse effects of psychiatric medications. While diagnostic expansionism and Big Pharma certainly deserve a large share of the blame for this epidemic, there is another reason.

A June 2013 Gallup poll revealed that 70% of Americans hate their jobs or have “checked out” of them. Life may or may not suck any more than it did a generation ago, but our belief in “progress” has increased expectations that life should be more satisfying, resulting in mass disappointment. For many of us, society has become increasingly alienating, isolating and insane, and earning a buck means more degrees, compliance, a__-kissing, s__-eating, and inauthenticity. So, we want to rebel. However, many of us feel hopeless about the possibility of either our own escape from societal oppression or that political activism can create societal change. So, many of us, especially young Americans, rebel by what is commonly called mental illness...

The Mental Illness Epidemic

Severe, disabling mental illness has dramatically increased in the United States. Marcia Angell, in her 2011 *New York Review of Books* piece, summarizes, “The tally of those who are so disabled by mental disorders that they

qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) increased nearly two-and-a-half times between 1987 and 2007 — from 1 in 184 Americans to 1 in 76. For children, the rise is even more startling — a thirty-five-fold increase in the same two decades.”

Angell also reports that a large survey of adults conducted between 2001 and 2003 sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health found that at some point in their lives, 46% of Americans met the criteria established by the American Psychiatric Association for at least one mental illness.

In 1998, Martin Seligman, then president of the American Psychological Association, spoke to the National Press Club about an American depression epidemic, “We discovered two astonishing things about the rate of depression across the century. The first was there is now between ten and twenty times as much of it as there was fifty years ago. And the second is that it has become a young person’s problem. When I first started working in depression thirty years ago... the average age at which the first onset of depression occurred was 29.5... Now the average age is between 14 and 15.”

In 2011, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that antidepressant use in the United States has increased nearly 400% in the last two decades, making antidepressants the most frequently used class of medications by Americans ages 18–44 years. By 2008, 23% of women ages 40–59 years were taking antidepressants.

The CDC, on May 3, 2013, reported that the suicide rate among Americans ages 35–64 years increased 28.4% between 1999 and 2010 (from 13.7 suicides per 100,000 population in 1999 to 17.6 per 100,000 in 2010).

The *New York Times* reported in 2007 that the number of American children and adolescents treated for

bipolar disorder had increased 40-fold between 1994 and 2003. In May 2013, [the] CDC reported in “Mental Health Surveillance Among Children — United States, 2005–2011,” the following, “A total of 13–20% of children living in the US experience a mental disorder in a given year, and surveillance during 1994–2011 has shown the prevalence of these conditions to be increasing.”

Over-Diagnosis, Pathologizing the Normal, and Psychiatric Drug Adverse Effects

Even within mainstream psychiatry, few continue to argue that the increase in mental illness is due to previous under-diagnosis of mental disorders. The most common explanations for the mental illness epidemic include recent over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, diagnoses expansionism, and psychiatry’s pathologizing normal behavior.

The first *DSM* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*), psychiatry’s diagnostic bible, was published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1952 and listed 106 disorders (initially called “reactions”). *DSM-2* was published in 1968, and the number of disorders increased to 182. *DSM-3* was published in 1980, and though homosexuality was dropped from it, diagnoses were expanded to 265, with several child disorders added that would soon become popular, including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). *DSM-4*, published in 1994, contained 365 diagnoses.

DSM-5 was published in May, 2013. The journal *PLOS Medicine* reported in 2012, “69% of the *DSM-5* task force members report having ties to the pharmaceutical industry.” *DSM-5* did not add as many new diagnoses as had previous revisions. However, *DSM-5* has been criticized even by some mainstream psychiatrists such as Allen Frances, the former chair of the *DSM-4* taskforce, for creating more mental patients by making it easier to

qualify for a mental illness, especially for depression. (See Frances’ “Last Plea To DSM-5: Save Grief From the Drug Companies”).

In the last two decades, there have been a slew of books written by journalists and mental health professionals about the lack of science behind the DSM, the over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, and the pathologizing of normal behaviors. A sample of these books includes: Paula Caplan’s *They Say You’re Crazy* (1995), Herb Kutchins and Stuart Kirk’s *Making Us Crazy* (1997), Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield’s *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder* (2007), Christopher Lane’s *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness* (2008), Stuart Kirk, Tomi Gormory, and David Cohen’s *Mad Science: Psychiatric Coercion, Diagnosis, and Drugs* (2013), Gary Greenberg’s *The Book of Woe: The DSM and the Unmaking of Psychiatry* (2013), and Allen Frances’ *Saving Normal* (2013).

Even more remarkable than former chair of the DSM-4 taskforce, Allen Frances, jumping on the DSM-trashing bandwagon has been the harsh critique of DSM-5 by Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Insel recently announced that the DSM’s diagnostic categories lack validity, and that “NIMH will be re-orienting its research away from DSM categories.” And psychiatrist Robert Spitzer, former chair of the DSM-3 task force, wrote the foreword to Horwitz and Wakefield’s *The Loss of Sadness* and is now critical of DSM’s inattention to context in which the symptoms occur which, he points out, can medicalize normal experiences.

So, in just two decades, pointing out the pseudoscience of the DSM has gone from being an “extremist slur of radical anti-psychiatrists” to a mainstream proposition from the former chairs of both the DSM-3 and DSM-4 taskforces and the director of NIMH.

Yet another explanation for the epidemic may also be evolving from radical to mainstream, thanks primarily to the efforts of investigative journalist Robert Whitaker and his book *Anatomy of An Epidemic* (2010). Whitaker argues that the adverse effects of psychiatric medications are the primary cause of the epidemic. He reports that these drugs, for many patients, cause episodic and moderate emotional and behavioral problems to become severe, chronic, and disabling ones.

Examining the scientific literature that now extends over 50 years, Whitaker discovered that while some psychiatric medications for some people may be effective over the short term, these drugs increase the likelihood that a person will become chronically ill over the long term. Whitaker reports, “The scientific literature shows that many patients treated for a milder problem will worsen in response to a drug — say have a manic episode after taking an antidepressant — and that can lead to a new and more severe diagnosis like bipolar disorder.”

With respect to the dramatic increase of pediatric bipolar disorder, Whitaker points out that, “Once psychiatrists started putting ‘hyperactive’ children on Ritalin, they started to see prepubertal children with manic symptoms. Same thing happened when psychiatrists started prescribing antidepressants to children and teenagers. A significant percentage had manic or hypomanic reactions to the antidepressants.” And then [when] these children and teenagers are put on heavier duty drugs, including drug cocktails, [they] often do not respond favorably to treatment and deteriorate. And that, for Whitaker, is a major reason for the 35-fold increase between 1987 and 2007 of children classified as being disabled by mental disorders...

Whitaker’s explanation for the epidemic has now, even within mainstream psychiatric institutions, entered into the debate; for example, Whitaker was invited by

the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) to speak at their 2013 annual convention that took place [in] June. While Whitaker concludes that psychiatry’s drug-based paradigm of care is the primary cause of the epidemic, he does not rule out the possibility that various cultural factors may also be contributing to the increase in the number of mentally ill.

Mental Illness as Rebellion Against Society

“The most deadly criticism one could make of modern civilization is that apart from its man-made crises and catastrophes, it is not humanly interesting... In the end, such a civilization can produce only a mass man: incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities: at best patient, docile, disciplined to monotonous work to an almost pathetic degree... Ultimately such a society produces only two groups of men: the conditioners and the conditioned, the active and passive barbarians” — Lewis Mumford (1951).

Once it was routine for many respected social critics such as Lewis Mumford and Erich Fromm to express concern about the impact of modern civilization on our mental health. But today the idea that the mental illness epidemic is also being caused by a peculiar rebellion against a dehumanizing society has been, for the most part, removed from the mainstream map. When a societal problem grows to become all encompassing, we often no longer even notice it.

We are today disengaged from our jobs and our schooling. Young people are pressured to accrue increasingly large student-loan debt so as to acquire the credentials to get a job, often one which they will have little

enthusiasm about. And increasing numbers of us are completely socially isolated, having nobody who cares about us.

Returning to that June 2013 Gallup survey, “The State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement,” only 30% of workers “were engaged, or involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their workplace.” In contrast to this “actively engaged group,” 50% were “not engaged,” simply going through the motions to get a paycheck, while 20% were classified as “actively disengaged,” hating going to work and putting energy into undermining their workplace. Those with higher education levels reported more discontent with their workplace.

How engaged are we with our schooling? Another Gallup poll “The School Cliff: Student Engagement Drops With Each School Year” (released in January 2013), reported that the longer students stay in school, the less engaged they become. The poll surveyed nearly 500,000 students in 37 states in 2012, and found nearly 80% of elementary students reported being engaged with school, but by high school, only 40% reported being engaged. As the pollsters point out, “If we were doing right by our students and our future, these numbers would be the absolute opposite. For each year a student progresses in school, they should be more engaged, not less.”

Life clearly sucks more than it did a generation ago when it comes to student loan debt. According to American Student Assistance’s “Student Debt Loan Statistics,” approximately 37 million Americans have student loan debt. The majority of borrowers still paying back their loans are in their 30s or older. Approximately two-thirds of students graduate [from] college with some education debt. Nearly 30% of college students who take out loans drop out of school, and students who drop out of college before earning a degree struggle most with student loans. As of October 2012, the average amount

of student loan debt for the Class of 2011 was \$26,600, a 5% increase from 2010. Only about 37% of federal student-loan borrowers between 2004 and 2009 managed to make timely payments without postponing payments or becoming delinquent.

In addition to the pain of jobs, school, and debt, there is increasingly more pain of social isolation. A major study reported in the *American Sociological Review* in 2006, “Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks Over Two Decades,” examined Americans’ core network of confidants (those people in our lives we consider close enough to trust with personal information and whom we rely on as a sounding board). Authors reported that in 1985, 10% of Americans said that they had no confidants in their lives; but by 2004, 25% of Americans stated they had no confidants in their lives. This study confirmed the continuation of trends that came to public attention in sociologist Robert Putnam’s 2000 book *Bowling Alone*.

Underlying many of psychiatry’s nearly 400 diagnoses is the experience of helplessness, hopelessness, passivity, boredom, fear, isolation, and dehumanization — culminating in a loss of autonomy and community-connectedness. Do our societal institutions promote:

- Enthusiasm — or passivity?
- Respectful personal relationships — or manipulative impersonal ones?
- Community, trust, and confidence — or isolation, fear and paranoia?
- Empowerment — or helplessness?
- Autonomy (self-direction) — or heteronomy (institutional-direction)?
- Participatory democracy — or authoritarian hierarchies?
- Diversity and stimulation — or homogeneity and boredom?

Research (that I documented in *Commonsense Rebellion*) shows that those labeled with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) do worst in environments that are boring, repetitive, and externally controlled; and that ADHD-labeled children are indistinguishable from “normals” when they have chosen their learning activities and are interested in them. Thus, the standard classroom could not be more imperfectly designed to meet the learning needs of young people who are labeled with ADHD.

As I discussed last year in *AlterNet* in “Would We Have Drugged Up Einstein? How Anti-Authoritarianism Is Deemed a Mental Health Problem,” there is a fundamental bias in mental health professionals for interpreting inattention and noncompliance as a mental disorder. Those with extended schooling have lived for many years in a world where all pay attention to much that is unstimulating. In this world, one routinely complies with the demands of authorities. Thus for many MDs and PhDs, people who rebel against this attentional and behavioral compliance appear to be from another world — a diagnosable one.

The reality is that with enough helplessness, hopelessness, passivity, boredom, fear, isolation, and dehumanization, we rebel and refuse to comply. Some of us rebel by becoming inattentive. Others become aggressive. In large numbers we eat, drink, and gamble too much. Still others become addicted to drugs, illicit and prescription. Millions work slavishly at dissatisfying jobs, become depressed and passive aggressive, while no small number of us can't cut it and become homeless and appear crazy. Feeling misunderstood and uncared about, millions of us ultimately rebel against societal demands, however, given our wherewithal, our rebellions are often passive and disorganized, and routinely futile and self-destructive.

When we have hope, energy, and friends, we can choose to rebel against societal oppression with, for example, a wildcat strike or a back-to-the-land commune. But when we lack hope, energy, and friends, we routinely rebel without consciousness of rebellion and in a manner in which we today commonly call mental illness.

For some Americans, no doubt, the conscious goal is to get classified as mentally disabled so as to receive disability payments (averaging \$700 to \$1,400 per month). But isn't that too a withdrawal of cooperation with society and a rebellion of sorts, based on the judgment that this is the best paying and least miserable financial option?³²⁰

Add to mental illness the myriad of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), gonorrhea, syphilis, and venereal disease, and the society that has been regarded to be affluent and abundant is apparently at war with its own liberal progressivism. As if this level of self-degradation was not enough, there is yet more sexual dysfunction: dyspareunia (difficult coitus), incest, masturbation, Oedipus Complex, pedophilia (sexual desire in an adult for a child), sadomasochism (sexual pleasure obtained both by inflicting pain or receiving pain), satyriasis (abnormally intense sexual desire in men), trans-sexuality, vaginismus (a painful spasm of the vagina), and voyeurism (preoccupation of seeing sex acts or sex organs of others).³²¹ These types of abnormalities seem to be more intense and more frequent in "wealthy" and "prosperous" societies. The human output of such ego-driven and self-centered societies, obsessed as they are with possessing things material, comes at the expense of its own lost productivity, diminishing comfort, irretrievable security, and vanished playfulness. And with such a level of moral corruption pervading all of society, should anyone be surprised that the political corps of "progressive" nation-states are all too ready to auction off state secrets to the highest bidder, to commit treason as a matter of self-interest, and to exchange top-secret information for immediate and illicit sexual

gratification. This is only the beginning of that long slide into the abyss. And Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was on the mark,

“If you see Allah giving aplenty to a subject [of His] from this world — whatever he wants and desires — despite his sins and crimes, then [know] that this is gradual entrapment.” Then he recited, **“Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all [good] things, until — even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted — We suddenly took them to task: and lo! they were broken in spirit.”**³²²

To reiterate here once more, the social law relating to the demise of false societies applies only when ordinary people undertake an effort to erect a virtuous society represented by an *ummah*. This is when the dynamics between the two will cause the fallacious society to self-destruct. Allah's (ﷻ) social law does not work when people who claim to be devoted to God sit back and do nothing, when Muslims speak and do not struggle. Such Muslims are not representative of Allah's truth and therefore are not ready to catalyze His will; in such a state of inertia where they do not commit to a “breach of peace” with *kufir*, they should not expect anything of import to happen. The truth is best expressed through the motivated exertions of a consolidated body of people, a united front of determination that struggles to make Allah's authority a reference point in people's conscience and community. The committed Muslims are not looking for a confrontation, however it is their struggle for the supremacy of Allah's commanding authority that brings them to the impasse with worldly authoritarian lords who claim ultimate power and authority in the world, **“Had it not been for people interacting [on this basis] with each other the world would have been ruined” (2:251).**

After this, the Qur'an places the authority-deniers — those who pretentiously build themselves up to rival or compete with Allah (the *mushriks*) — face to face with His severity, that is, their

own hearing, seeing, and sensing is leveraged to make them “feel” what is being said to them,

Say, “What do you think? If Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts — what deity but Allah is here that could bring it all back to you?” Behold how many facets We give to Our messages — and yet they turn away in disdain! (6:46).

Inveterate *mushriks* must be placed in positions to hear this rebuke from Allah. So long as they do not apprehend these words, such fugitives from Allah (ﷻ) may entertain notions that they can get away with their worldly attitude and their rebellion against Him as authority. More than anyone else, Allah’s words here are directed at the *mushriks*, to prevent them from consolidating their position against the Prophet (ﷺ) and the truth he brought in the revelation.

In quick succession they are presented with another scenario, one that Allah has demonstrated from age to age and from area to area. At this point, they must come to terms with the death and destruction that ultimately befalls all people of evil, crime, and injustice. The retribution due upon them may come abruptly, as a surprise, or it may even be expected, but always when nothing can be done to delay it,

Say, “Can you imagine what your condition will be if Allah’s chastisement befalls you, either suddenly or in a [gradually] perceptible manner? [But then], will any but evildoing folk [ever] be destroyed?” (6:47).

When Allah’s (ﷻ) consuming punishment comes, it arrives “on His watch.” The divine timetable is not known to man, and hence, the comeuppance could be anytime of day, any time of the year. People may be totally aloof, or they may try to take precautions, but none of that can detract from the fact that a social law is now in motion, and nothing in man’s power can stop it. The *mushriks* were the ones who thought they were all-powerful, but at this

point, even they will not be able to prevent their civilization from going under. When these cataclysmic events occur no one is able to withstand them — man’s weaknesses, limitations, and utter helplessness are truly brought to the fore. Those worldly authorities are now shown to be as unprotected, vulnerable, and exposed as the most indigent amongst them were during those carefree days of unbridled extravagance.

To the oblivious *mushriks* of any given time and place, the words of these *āyāt* may seem to amount to nothing more than trivial threats. But the lessons of history reveal them to be the facts of life; when the prophets of old expressed such words to the offensive and hardline opponents of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power, they knew that impending doom was close at hand,

And We send [Our] message-bearers only as heralds of glad tidings and as warners; hence, all who commit themselves [to Him] and live righteously, no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve; whereas those who give the lie to Our messages, suffering will afflict them as a result of all their [institutionalized] sinful practices (6:48–49).

The Qur’an is meant for the rational self of every thinking being; from the point it came down, physical miracles and material wonders would no longer attend the absorption of revelation by man. This Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ) stand for and speak to the human faculty of thinking and reasoning. Long before the man in Europe discovered his own intellect after wrestling with the church for a few hundred years, the Muslims were by their very nature and disposition people of ideas and thoughts. The transition from miracles to mind has not been an easy undertaking; it still remains a work in progress because there are considerable pockets of people here and there who believe and act as though miracles are the only validators of scripture and apostle. They refuse to work their brains to understand the cognitive content and the set of circumstances and conditions that “make sense,” “touch a chord,” or “stand to rea-

son” concerning Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and Message. Creation itself is an open book that has to be approached by an active intellect in light of the erudition that comes to man from Allah through his mind. Any man with a functional faculty of thought can read through the Qur’an, observe the unmitigated wonder and perfect balance of the reality around, and then find no contradiction or inconsistency. Man need not be consumed by the theological theories or philosophical postulates of the Greek or “Christian” flavors to comprehend what Allah (ﷻ) is saying to him. Similarly, he need not be drawn into the physical and sensual concepts that were in vogue during the times of Egyptian, Indian, Persian, or Buddhist ascendancy. Conversely, on the other extreme, he need not be amazed by the semi-deification of the mind by today’s world of science.

Allah has clearly defined the mission of His Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ). These prophets, as interpreters and oracles, spoke the truth when it is not fashionable to speak it. By expressing the truth publicly, they swam against the current. They became persecuted public figures because they championed the truth when virtually the rest of society was more interested in everything and anything but. Being outspoken with the truth about temporal authorities and powers was never interpreted by the latter as a passing fad. Publicizing the truth about true authority and false authority, real power and fake power, the One God and the multitudes of “human-gods” exacted its toll.

Consistent with this “spreading the word” responsibility, there was good news for those who would abandon a lust of pleasure and profits for a life of enrichment and fulfillment in the company of Allah and His Apostle (ﷺ); and bad news for those who would continue to stand for their gods-in-the-ego, gods of military prowess, and gods of gold and silver. Good works coming out of a fervent and intimate relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet would alleviate any fear or grief, sorrow or brokenheartedness. Nothing in the past, present, or future would dampen the spirit of those subjects of Allah (ﷻ). As for those who would conspire to fight the truth with words and weapons in their stubborn contestation of Allah and His apostles, they would set themselves up for personal tragedy and

community insolvency with all the ensuing suffering and torment. That is because they were degenerate, decomposed, and degraded, “...*bi-mā kānū yafsuqūn*” (6:49). The words *shirk* and *kufr* are commensurate with *ẓulm* and *fiṣq* respectively in most of the *āyāt* in the Qur’an.

The Muslims’ responsibility at present is to ignite anew this dynamic. If they take care to attend to this Qur’an and learn from this Prophet, they have no choice but to set into motion the law of Allah (*sunnaḥ*), which will split society into two factions: one on the side of Allah and His Prophet, and the other opposed to both of them. Whether man is united or divided depends on whom he chooses as his authority and power. As to the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ), we maintain — and we should be able to express this to any listening human being in the world — that all authority and power belong to Allah (ﷻ), and not to some king, president, prime minister, general secretary, or the like.

In the Qur’an and Muhammad (ﷺ), all humanity has a book and a prophet that exhaustively explain this essential fact of life, history, and progress. This social law of the Creator has been slow to take its course because we, the committed Muslims, have been derelict. We have failed in the true sense of the word to speak Allah’s truth to the tyrant’s power. The Islamic movements and solidarities around the globe will have to come out of their shells and begin this long-abandoned task of the prophets. No one else is going to do this. And if, Allah (ﷻ) forbid, we fail our responsibility to Him and His prophets, we too will be part of the problem. Visible on the horizon now is a generation of committed Muslims and oppressed people who will one day be the upholders of this relationship with Allah, who will in the coming years assume this all-important responsibility and lead a confused world from its dying gasps. The rumblings of this change-in-the-making can be heard in Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Southeast Asia, Northeast Africa, and in many other parts of this world that is, after generations and centuries of darkness, beginning to inch away from Satan.

The irrepressible Muslim tide of tomorrow has rekindled our hope and optimism that the long night of irresponsibility and

failure to act is coming to a welcome end. The patience and push of today are spawning the radical change and the revolution of tomorrow. We are beginning to talk the language of the Qur'an and Muhammad, and we will, *inshā'allāh* walk the course of the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ).

Weight of Class Distinction upon Man-Made Religion

The following lesson continues with the impasse between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the elements in society who refuse to accede to the truth. The sequence of *āyāt* here reiterate the divine response to those who want to find God through physical miracles and material wonders. Human beings in general tend to entertain misconceptions about prophets and scriptures, and this lesson came to correct their misguided suppositions. Materialistic societies and militaristic governments have a way of distorting facts about revelation and divine communication. The influence of governments and the power of establishments to affect how people think and how events unfold has been so profound over the ages that prophets are somehow perceived to be closer to superstition than to science, and that scriptures are viewed to be more myth than reality. Thus, prophethood in the public mind is akin to magic and sorcery. Revelation itself is regarded as a form of illusion. This public notion about prophets and apostles causes people socialized in this manner to ask a supposed prophet about what the future holds. Given their impression that prophets are on par with wizards, or maybe the extraterrestrial, these types of people ultimately begin to demand miracles.

And so in response to this willful human waywardness, the hard-hitting lesson here aims to bring people back to their senses and the facts of the real world. It tells them that man's relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is uncomplicated, unproblematic, and unsuspecting. The message and the messenger have nothing to do with superstition, fiction, or "spooky things." The recurring meaning in the *āyāt* below, which applies to ancient and modern societies alike, is that when people come under the influence of ungodly systems they begin to distort the image of prophets and deform the meaning of scriptures, to such an extent that there is no longer any substantial difference between these prophets and scriptures on the one hand and witchcraft and voodooism on the other.

After this fact is established, the lesson goes on to present the Muslims' conviction and creed free of any of the accrued sophistry that tends to accumulate as times and climes wear on. Not to over-

state this fact, the Qur'an is already perfect; any human embellishments would only make it imperfect. However, this word of Allah (ﷻ) was meant as a divine guidance for human beings and it was brought to them by the Prophet (ﷺ) — who was a human being. Other than his impeccable character, by the typical standards of judgement, he was not extraordinary — he was not copiously or hereditarily wealthy, he had no advanced knowledge of the coming future, and he was not an angel. What distinguished him was that he was selected by His Sustainer to receive Scripture and Revelation, and he followed what he was told from on high.

Those individuals and societies who accept this fact are honorable and noble. They deserve from Allah what He has willed upon Himself: the attribute of grace and the law of mercy. Through all this, the conscience of man matures, his sensitivity to Allah (ﷻ) expands, and his sense of *taqwá* becomes more and more astute. A prophet interacts with his people along these lines. It could be said that the functionality of prophets comes not only through their unimpeachable receptivity to Allah's message and its responsibilities, but also through their human nature. This is the standard by which societies are measured. This is the norm flowing through human history — a norm that has been undermined by the mass media so as to devalue the human potential and subvert the public inclination toward God in man's state of nature.

- (6:50) Say [O Prophet], “I do not say to you [who object], ‘Allah’s treasures are with me’; nor [do I say], ‘I know the things that are beyond the reach of human perception’; nor do I say to you, ‘Behold, I am an angel’; I but follow what is revealed to me.” Say, “Can the blind and the seeing be deemed equal? Will you not, then, take thought?”
- (6:51) And warn hereby those who fear lest they be gathered unto their Sustainer with none to protect them from Him or to intercede with Him, so that they might become [fully] conscious of Him.
- (6:52) Hence, repulse not [any of] those who at morning and evening invoke their Sustainer, seeking His counte-

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ
 إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِن آتَيْعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ
 أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
 لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدْ
 الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدُوفَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
 حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ
 فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ
 لِيَقُولُوا أَهْتُولَاءُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ
 بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ
 عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ
 سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾
 وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ الْأَيَّاتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

nance. You are in no way accountable for them — just as they are in no way accountable for you — and you have therefore no right to repulse them: for then you would be among the evildoers.

- (6:53) For it is in this way that We try men through one another — to the end that they might ask, “Has Allah, then, bestowed His favor upon those others in preference to us?” Does not Allah know best as to who is grateful [to Him]?
- (6:54) And when those who are committed to Our *āyāt* come to you, say, “Peace be upon you, Your Sustainer has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy — so that if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and lives righteously, He shall be [found] much-forgiving, merciful.”
- (6:55) And thus clearly do We spell out Our *āyāt* — and [We do it] so that the path of those who are lost in sin might be distinct [from that of the righteous] (al-An‘ām:50–55).

To have a full appreciation of the meaning of the first sentence in this lesson, the reader needs to realize that the members of a material and errant society expect a prophet to have “status” — and this status accordingly has to be defined by their own measures of assessment. Hence, not just anyone can speak to society without at least a “reputation”; he has to be renowned, as through miracles and supernatural acts. Without this type of prestige the person who says he is a prophet does not qualify for public attention or recognition. Here, Muhammad (ﷺ) is told by Allah (ﷻ) to inform such people that he is only a prophet, just like all the other prophets who came before him, and that he has good news for those who respond favorably and bad news for those who respond negatively.

Logically speaking, a society withdrawn from God does not have any business trying to define who is or who is not a prophet. How does it qualify to say what the meaning of divinity is or what the validity of prophethood is? Just because some members of such a society have worldly, immediate, and transient power, this does not make them the authorities on such matters; hence, they stand on no firm ground to implore a prophet to perform supernatural, paranormal, or miraculous things. In their expectations, they mean to say in an indirect manner that an ordinary and common man

like Muhammad (ﷺ) cannot possibly be a prophet unless he demonstrates he is more than human, someone closer to divinity than to humanity, as are angels. He should have more knowledge than an average human being, even though such ability is not part of the mission or the message he is responsible for. In their own awkward and biased judgement, communicating a divine message does not mix with being human because human frailties and shortcomings disqualify one from being a prophet, a messenger from God, and a bearer of scripture.

And so, Muhammad (ﷺ) was counseled to say that he does not have Allah's treasures under his discretionary control, that he does not disperse sustenance or distribute favors from His resources to people here and there. These treasures or collection of precious things are the property of Allah (ﷻ), **"...to Allah belongs the resources/accessories of the heavens and the earth" (63:7)**. No human being is able to do such a thing, except if and when Allah Himself authorizes such dispensation. It appears that the issue of resources was foremost on their minds. They expected a prophet — if he is truly a prophet — to be in control of resources and to have the ability to deal materially with unusual problems. The material *quid pro quo* in their minds centered around Muhammad (ﷺ) delivering before they would commit to God. Thus, their acknowledgement of the God of Muhammad (ﷺ) was contingent upon him demonstrating his qualifications — qualifications according to their self-serving notions, and not God's. They conditioned their commitment to God upon extraordinary and supernatural things: springs of water and rivers in the land of Makkah along with gardens and orchards, not to mention stellar terrestrial feats and palpable angels or even God Himself. These and other things were expected of the Prophet (ﷺ) as the discourse in *Sūrah al-Isrā'* relates,

And so they say, "[O Muhammad], we shall not believe you until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, or you have a garden of date-palms and vines and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst in a sudden rush, or you cause the skies to fall down upon

us in smithereens, as you have threatened, or [until] you bring Allah and the angels face to face before us, or you have a house [made] of gold, or you ascend to heaven — but no, we would not [even] believe in your ascension unless you bring down to us [from heaven] a writing we [ourselves] could read!”

Say you, [O Prophet], “Limitless in His glory is my Sustainer! Am I, then, anything but a mortal man, an apostle?” Yet whenever [Allah’s] guidance came to them [through a prophet], nothing has ever kept people from believing [in him] save this their objection, “Would Allah have sent a [mere] mortal man as His apostle?” Say, “If angels were walking about on earth as their natural abode, We would indeed have sent down to them an angel out of heaven as Our apostle” (17:90–95).

So before these importunate people could go on with their nonsense, the Prophet (ﷺ) was ordered to inform them directly and unequivocally that he would not be performing any of these marvelous, amazing, and supernatural acts.

The knowledge of the future, which only Allah (ﷻ) knows, has been placed beyond the bounds of human capacities, “...and I do not know what is beyond my sensory perception (*ghayb*).” This means, like any other human being, that which Allah has not apprised the Prophet (ﷺ) of pertaining to pre- or post-sensual events, he has no knowledge of. Hence the Prophet, even though he is one of Allah’s messengers, has no apprehension of phenomena that have not been brought into his conscious and discerning recognition. This would apply to the details of the coming life (the *ākhirah*). The *ghayb* is to information what *khazā’inu-allāh* is to distribution. These lie within the management domain of Allah and not that of His subjects. We humans, prophets included, were not equipped with extra-sensory abilities to manage Allah’s resources or to be privy to what is beyond our limited general conscious awareness.

For rational purposes, *ghayb* in one sense is absolute and inevitable, even though all humans and even angels have no knowl-

edge of it, “Say, ‘No one in the heavens or earth knows the *ghayb* except Allah’” (27:65). There can also be a *ghayb* of relativity, proportionality, or quantum — a type that some of Allah’s (ﷻ) creation is aware of while others are not. This category consists of what the angels know about the world of man, which man himself does not know. Yet a third form of *ghayb* discloses itself to some people because of their knowledge, experience, and scientific advancement as compared to other people’s lack or absence thereof.

The *ghayb* (literally, *unknown*) can be known as a matter of mathematical or computational formulas. The eclipse of the Sun, Moon, or other celestial planets may be predicted with certainty by scientists, astronomers, and others, thus making something “unknown” known. The precision of such calculations can be within seconds, hundreds, or even thousands of years before the event. Satellites have pierced some of the unknown on earth and in space.

Another channel into the *ghayb* is extrasensory perception, intuition, or inspiration. Clairvoyance is the acquisition of information about an object or a contemporaneous external physical event by alleged paranormal means, that is, intuitively, without the use of the senses. The term *pre-cognitive clairvoyance* is used to refer to the supposed paranormal procurement of information about an external physical source that will come into existence at some time in the future. Together with telepathy (communication between people without using any known visible, tangible, or audible medium) and precognition (the ability to foresee future events or events as yet unreported), clairvoyance makes up the three main categories of extrasensory perception, and as such is a major topic of current parapsychological research. Extrasensory perception (ESP), considered one of the two major classes of allegedly paranormal phenomena of interest to parapsychologists (the other being psychokinesis), is defined as the apparent gaining of information about an object or event (mental or physical; past, present, or future) by means other than those currently understood by the physical sciences.³²³

These perceptions are seemingly experienced independently of the five senses, hence the term extrasensory. As validity is tested,

the possibility arises that there may be forces not yet explored within the social and physical sciences. Critical and constructive work is being carried on today. Such research may point to human potential that has yet been little explored. This knowledge is being collected in two ways. One is through reports made by people of their experiences. Such narratives, subjective as they may be, are tested by carefully developed questions through which the elements of chance, coincidence, and personal memory are filtered. Another method of research is through controlled laboratory work. Tests are so arranged as to remove the element of coincidence when people seem to know hidden information. It has been found that subjects respond more accurately when they are relaxed and when the relationship with the researcher is good.

Recently dreams have been considered subjects for extrasensory perception, but not with the psychoanalytic goal of therapy. Research in this area is an inquiry into the possibility that people and events from the past or future may enter the dream life of some people. Faith healing is another parapsychological phenomenon, involving an interaction between seeker and healer by touch or voice, present to each other or absent.

The *ghayb* similarly encompasses what is known as the *paranormal*, that which is beyond the bounds of what can be explained in terms of currently held scientific knowledge. Thus, to describe an event as paranormal requires that all other possible explanations, based on known principles, be ruled out. However, the use of the term does not imply that the eventual explanation, as science discovers more about allegedly paranormal events, will be non-physical; it allows for the possibility that new discoveries in physics may account for events that are now classified as paranormal. This is in contrast with the term *supernatural*, which implies a non-physical explanation for events that lie forever beyond natural laws.³²⁴

Parapsychology is the scientific study of certain aspects of the paranormal, primarily those in which an organism appears

1. to receive information from its environment through some means not presently understood, that is, extrasensory perception (ESP); or

2. to exert an influence on its environment through some means not presently understood in the laboratory or in everyday life, that is, psychokinesis (PK).

Although the terms *parapsychology* and *psychical research* are roughly equivalent, some topics considered to be the subject matter of psychical research in its early days, such as hypnosis, had become part of “orthodox” psychology and medicine by the time the term parapsychology came into use, and so the latter incorporates only those topics that seem to have a paranormal component according to today’s knowledge.³²⁵

In addition, the term has tended to be applied to studies of the paranormal that have used scientific methodology. Parapsychology began developing as an area of research from the time that a group of Cambridge scholars established the Society for Psychical Research in London in 1882. Subsequent groups were started elsewhere in Europe and the United States. A milestone was reached in the English-speaking world when a research center was established at Duke University by J.B. Rhine and William McDougall in 1927, the former gaining prominence in the 1930s with his application of laboratory methods. Publication of the positive results of Rhine’s research had considerable impact on scientists, although interest declined when others found it difficult to repeat his results themselves. In the present day, the reality of paranormal phenomena remains controversial, but increasingly sophisticated approaches to experimentation offer hopes of increasing the level of repeatability between different laboratories. Meanwhile, the scientific approach of parapsychology appears to be gaining respectability, with the acceptance of the Parapsychological Association as an affiliate by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1969, and the establishment of the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology at the University of Edinburgh in 1985.³²⁶

Psychokinesis, which is one of the two major classes of allegedly paranormal phenomena studied by parapsychologists, is defined as the influencing by a living agent of a physical system or object by means other than those currently understood by the physical sci-

ences. The phenomenon was earlier referred to as telekinesis. *Psi* is a parapsychological term for certain paranormal processes, embracing both extrasensory perception and psychokinesis. The term, first introduced by British psychologist R.H. Thouless, borrows the letter of the Greek alphabet most appropriate to stand for things considered as psychic.³²⁷

From the above, it appears that human consciousness does have access to “bits and pieces” of the larger and looming unknown (*ghayb*). This, though, does not mean that a human or social being has the capacity to manage events that are at the outstart within the realm of Allah’s (ﷻ) decree and decision. A prophet, by any definition, is a human being, a mortal, and subject to the limitations of his physical body and emotional and psychological being. Gaining insight into the “unknown” is done by way of inspiration and revelation. But even after receiving such revelation, a prophet is still incapable of altering or interfering with the laws of creation, both physical and social. This may explain to a certain degree why not one prophet was able to guide anyone in and of himself. To this end, Allah (ﷻ) says to His beloved final prophet, “**Their guidance is not on you, rather it is Allah who guides whom He wills**” (2:272). If prophets were able to control individual or social behavior modification in matters pertaining to social laws (Allah’s *sunan*), then Noah would have been able to guide his own son, and Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) his father/uncle Āzar. Access to the unknown remains a function of Allah’s bounty, and it is commensurate with man’s struggle for Him. In this context, Allah says,

He [alone] knows that which is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, and to none does He disclose any of the mysteries of His own unfathomable knowledge, unless it be to an apostle whom He has been pleased to elect [therefor]: and then He sends forth [the forces of heaven] to watch over him in whatever lies open before him and in what is beyond his awareness — so as to make manifest that it is indeed [but] their Sustainer’s messages that these [apostles] deliver. For it

is He who encompasses [with His knowledge] all they have [to say], just as He takes count, one by one, of everything [that exists] (72:26–28).

Fallout from People of Previous Scripture

Say [O Prophet], “I do not say to you [decliners of scripture], ‘Allah’s treasures are with me’; nor [do I say] ‘I know the things that are beyond the reach of human perception’; nor do I say to you, ‘Behold, I am an angel’; I but follow what is revealed to me.” Say, “Can the blind and the seeing be deemed equivalent? Will you not, then, be thoughtful?” (6:50).

People from the Prophet’s own society would come up to him and tell him to produce uncommon and incomparable exploits, so that they could have some degree of confidence in responding favorably to him. They would do this despite their decades-long experience with how truthful and how reliable Muhammad (ﷺ) was. At one time these social opponents of the Prophet would ask him to turn al-Şafā and al-Marwaḥ into gold; at another, to relocate these hills of Makkah to a place more fertile with running waters and abundant fruits and vegetables.³²⁸ And then they would tell him to forecast for them what will happen in the future, to produce for them an angel they could see with their own eyes, and to have a book come down from heaven before those same eyes so that they can see him catch this book in thin air. All these demands and suggestions just cloaked their unwillingness to assert the authenticity of a man they knew very well could never fabricate the title of prophet for himself.

A fallout effect from miracle-centered Jewish and miracle-specific Christian cultures seems to have taken hold in the Arabian Peninsula of that day. Hence, any person claiming to be a prophet would have to authenticate himself by means of miracles. In the Old Testament, for example, the older layers of tradition depict

miracles as signs of divine confirmation of a leader of the nation, especially in a time of crisis. Thus Moses (ﷺ) was commissioned by God to lead the people out of slavery in Egypt and into the land of the Canaanites, which God had promised to give them (Exodus, 3:7–10). When Moses asked how he could persuade the people that he had indeed been called by God for this task, God provided him a series of signs intended to persuade any doubters: his staff transformed into a snake and then back again; his hand was given a glow that could be activated as needed, and when he poured out the water of the Nile it became blood (Exodus, 4:1–10).

Miracles are events attributed to supernatural intervention. In a strict sense the concept of miracle as a suspension of or exception to the laws of nature presupposes the notion of nature as a closed system of causal relations. Consequently miracles could become a theological and philosophical problem only at a later date; at an earlier stage the distinction would not have been between natural and supernatural, but between usual — that is, normal — and extraordinary phenomena. Though the normal run of things is divinely willed and ordered (Genesis, 8:22; Psalms, 104:1–35), special intervention breaking through this established order is possible and, in fact, characteristic of biblical history. God works “signs and wonders” for Israel, to save His people and make them “believe” (Exodus, 4:1–10); elsewhere it is indicated that miracles must not be considered to prove the truth of any message or teaching but may occur to test steadfastness. Biblical and talmudic legend recount miracles wrought by or to (through their merits) many saintly “men of God.” Medieval Jewish philosophers attempted to rationalize miracles. In support of their views they quoted a rabbinic saying (Avot, 4:6) to the effect that miracles were foreordained at the time of creation, that is, their occurrence does not really constitute contradiction of the natural order. Rationalists have sought natural explanations for miracles described in the Bible, while modern scholarship is inclined to regard them as products of creative religious imagination.³²⁹

Secular and materialistic societies, though they may have been divinely committed at some point in their history, have been

running more often with their confused and misleading ideas about prophets, prophecy, and scripture. The centuries of secularism along with its doctrines that reject scriptural guidance have resulted in a deceptive and doubtful approach to prophets and their divinely defined duties. Hence, people — then and now — have almost automatic expectations of prophets to foretell the future or bend the laws of nature via some recourse to wizardry or witchcraft. The *mushriks* of Makkah were no exception to the rule; so when Muhammad (ﷺ) told them he is a prophet, they reacted by asking him to prove himself through the working of miracles. It was in response to this attitude that this Book of Record made a concerted effort to put everyone and everything back in their original positions concerning the nature of prophets and scriptures,

Say [O Prophet], “I do not say to you [*mushriks*] that I am in possession of Allah’s gems, nor do I say that I know what is removed from human perception (*ghayb*), and I do not say to you that I am an angel. All I do is follow what has been revealed to me.” Say, “Is a blind and a seeing man evenly matched? Do you not think [things] over?” (6:50).

The Prophet (ﷺ) is ordered by Allah (ﷻ) to present himself to the people as an honest and modest human being, disengaged from all the assumptions and fabrications about prophets and prophecy that have become part of temporal and lay society. Here, Islamic attachment to Allah and appealing Islamic doctrine is presented without exaggerations, presumptions, and insinuations. This plain-spoken moral doctrine is presented to the public by a human prophet whose only concern is for people to see the light and to walk the course.

This Prophet, with all the reality befitting his honest-to-God humanity, was only “following orders” from on high. He was not a person sitting on his laurels. He was not one to disperse wealth and fortune to his aids and supporters, nor was he one to favor his inner circle with privileged information about the future that no one else

could have access to. At the beginning of his mission, he had no temporal power to speak of, especially not the kind of power that enables one to make wild claims such as belonging to the ranks of angels. He, Muhammad (ﷺ), was a mortal — and an apostle. And this is the essential fact people are going to have to come to grips with to transcend stereotypes, propaganda, and superstitions that have cluttered the public mind about prophets and prophethood.

The Islamic conception is in no need of seductive trappings to allure people. It is custom-made for human nature and the *fiṭrah* from instinct to intellect. Islam is self-sufficient, requiring no miraculous or supernatural enticements. The person who wants Islam in the way Allah intended it is the one who deserves it and is entitled to all its blessings. Such a person treasures and prizes Islam like no other. But as for those who regard Islam to be some kind of market commodity, they do not understand its essence; to them Islam is not a quality or a morale, and thus they fail to appreciate its precious offering.

For this reason the Prophet (ﷺ) was commanded to lay out Islam without the kind of appeal consistent with miracles. The fact of the matter is that Islam in its aptness for human nature and the Qur’an in its perfection are miracles in and of themselves, and for those who are sensitive enough to pick it up, that is the draw. Those who are attracted to Islam in this manner can expect no treasures of wealth, no rank and status, and no upper-class distinction. Any ranking within the domain of Islam will occur on the basis of *taqwá* — the conscious recognition of Allah’s (ﷻ) power presence everywhere, all the time. In this context, the *āyah* is worth repeating,

Say [O Muhammad], “I do not say to you [my opponents in society] that I am in possession of Allah’s reserves; and I do not have [detailed] knowledge of the *terra incognita*; and I do not say to you that I am a cherub. I but comply with what has been divulged to me [from on high]... (6:50).

Anyone who understands this simple and modest expression, along with this Prophet who is unassuming, unpretentious, and unostentatious, has taken the first step into the light, **“Say, “Is a blind person and a seeing person on an equal par? Do you not reflect?”**

Therefore, the conditional relation is established: whoever adheres to this Prophet and this Book is guided and on a correct course in life — a person with visual modality and discernment; conversely, he who parts with Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an is blind and incoherent. This lesson says as much, even-handedly and without pretension. But how does all this impact the human mind?

Unlike the trials of the human mind and the tribulations of the rational self in other religions the answer is quite clear in the mental sphere of committed Muslims. The basic fact is that this divine revelation is intended for the human mind. Allah (ﷻ) endowed man with the ability to think and He revealed this Scripture of meanings so that man can measure the quality of his thinking. It is the human mind, and only the human mind, that is able to unlock the meanings embedded in scripture. The human mind was made specifically for the purpose of decoding relevant meanings and accumulating related experiences. This Scripture offers the human mind an opportunity to go to work, to think over the meanings therein, and to probe its horizons, which offer the human experience abundant responses and solutions to its problems and conditions.

The problem with the human mind begins when this mind breaks away from scripture, or runs away from Allah (ﷻ). At that moment and in that process the human mind begins to falter, flutter, and fail. The human mind, absent this Qur’anic information, becomes fuzzy and then ultimately blind to the issues. This results in miscalculations and then society at large begins to malfunction. Away from this Qur’an, the human mind fails to see the bigger picture; the micro becomes confused with the macro. Tactics become substitutes for strategy. Human behavior, social programs, and ideologies begin to miscarry and go wrong. And in the end, existence itself cannot come into focus.

The Qur’an is what brings human existence and life into focus. The mind then is capable of concentration and scrutiny. A

non-Qur'anic mind jumps from one experiment to another, hops from one conclusion to the next, and shuttles between an endless array of assumptions that have no framework and no point of reference. How many times in our very limited lifetime have we observed God-forsaking societies going from championing labor to championing capital, from value-centered designs to wealth-obsessed ones? How many times have we watched political parties on the left concede to those on the right and vice versa? These and other social behaviors indicate that the human mind — as clever as it has been in thinking up solutions to ever-recurring problems — is in need of concentrating its attention on an ultimate clarity or distinctiveness, on a central point or locus, on a special emphasis attached to something, and on a fixed reference point that only Allah (ﷻ) can offer. This is exactly what is to be found in the life of the immaculate Prophet (ﷺ) and in the meanings of this living Qur'an.

Besides, man's mind itself needs its own discipline — a system of rules of conduct or method of practice, and associated training to enhance inherent strength and self-control. Otherwise, the human mind itself will come under the influence of personal preferences, self-interests, and individual egos.

The mind is an entity usually contrasted with the body or matter, as the mental is with the physical, but variously understood in the history of thought. In the broadest sense, included in or conflated with the meaning of soul, it is taken to be the distinction between the animate and the inanimate; in a narrower sense it is taken to be the distinguishing feature of persons, and related to self-consciousness and identity. It has posed problems of definition and explanation for philosophers, psychologists, and cognitive scientists, who from their different standpoints have tried to relate it to the brain and to behavior, even going to the extent of considering analogies with computer software.

The Qur'anically detached human mind has delved into the field of *behaviorism*, the view that psychology is most effectively pursued by analyzing the overt behavior of people and animals, in preference to subjective states, thoughts, or hypothetical internal

dynamics. It has had an important influence on modern psychology, but its appeal is much diminished with contemporary researchers.

The scripturally aloof mind has also wandered into *cognitive science*, the formal study of the mind, in which models originating in artificial intelligence (AI) and theories from the human sciences (particularly cognitive psychology, linguistics, and philosophy) are subjected to inter-disciplinary development. For example, a grammar written by a linguist might be implemented on a computer by an AI scientist, and its predictions tested by a psychologist observing human subjects. The dominant partner in this enterprise is often the AI scientist, since the major criterion for success is usually whether a program can be written and successfully implemented on a computer.

The mind unhinged from divine guidance has similarly ventured into *dualism*, a theory in philosophy that asserts the existence of two fundamental categories into which everything divides. Examples include Plato's distinction between temporal things and timeless forms, and Descartes' distinction between mind and matter. The notion contrasts with *monism*, the doctrine that reality consists of a single basic substance or element; and *pluralism*, the doctrine that reality consists of several basic substances or elements.³³⁰

The scripturally lonely mind eventually went on a tangent into *materialism*, the philosophical theory that there is nothing in existence over and above matter and matter in motion. Such a theory excludes the possibility of deities. It also sees the mind as an attribute of the physical, denying idealist theories that see the mind as something independent of the body — for example, Descartes' theory of "thinking substance." Like most other philosophical ideas, materialism probably arose among the early Greek thinkers. The Stoics and the Epicureans were materialists, as were the ancient Buddhists. Among later materialists were the likes of Thomas Hobbes, Denis Diderot, Baron d'Holbach, Ludwig Buchner, and Ernst Haeckel; David Hume, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Henry Huxley, and Herbert Spencer showed materialist tendencies.³³¹

There have been some less-informed people who claim that the mind is on par with divine revelation, saying that both mind

and revelation are God's creation, hence they must be equivalent. This argument is more philosophical than scriptural, for no *āyah* in the comprehensive Qur'an substantiates this notion. On the other end of the spectrum, there are some people who claim that the human mind and its rationalism is a substitute for God's revelation. This is equally impossible. The information on which man bases his belief is Allah's revealed Scripture, not that which comes from his limited mind or intellect. Allah (ﷻ) knows that the human mind may sway in different directions and that human instinct may careen hither or thither. There is nothing that conditions human intellect and corrects human instinct like Allah's words and His Prophet's works. The human mind interacting with divine meanings is enriched, guided, and disciplined, while the human mind deserting the same is impoverished, misguided, and unsettled.

Social Status Is Not a Prerequisite for Guidance

And warn hereby those who fear lest they be gathered unto their Sustainer with none to protect them from Him or to intercede with Him, so that they might become [fully] conscious of Him. Hence, repulse not [any of] those who at morning and evening invoke their Sustainer, seeking His countenance. You are not at all accountable for them — just as they are not at all accountable for you — and you have therefore no right to repulse them: for then you would be among the offenders.

For it is in this way that We try men through one another — to the end that they might ask, “Has Allah, then, bestowed His favor upon those others in preference to us?” Does not Allah know best as to who is grateful [to Him]? And when those who are committed to Our *āyāt* come to you, say, “Peace be upon you, Your Sustainer has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy — so that if any of you does a bad

deed out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and lives righteously, He shall be [found] much-forgiving, merciful” (6:51–54).

There are many kinds of people, there are many stripes of psychology, and there are different levels of fervency and attachment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet. From this sea of variation and deviation Allah tells Muhammad (ﷺ) to be most concerned with those who are fixated on Him and taken up by His Messenger,

And warn herewith those who fear lest they be gathered unto their Sustainer with none to protect them from Him or to intercede with Him, so that they might become [fully] conscious [of His power presence] (6:51).

Hence the Prophet (ﷺ) should prioritize warning and advising those who are preoccupied with the fear of Allah’s (ﷻ) assembly on Judgement Day, as they know for certain that, besides Allah, there is no preferential authority, nor interceding being. There is no intermediary between Allah and His subjects except for whom He authorizes. Likewise, there are no individuals or people who qualify for intercession except by Allah’s leave and permission. Those who are settled with this reverence and respect for Allah are the ones who are most apt to listen and obey, to understand and act, to think and work, **“Accordingly, repulse not [any of] those who at morn and evening invoke their Sustainer, seeking His visage...”**

Material “market forces” or secular social trends tend to disparage the value of people who are devoted to Allah (ﷻ), people who spend their nights and days consumed in their service to Him. The currents of life sometimes are so subtle and so “practical” that these good people are almost invisible to those who are in positions of authority. Therefore, on behalf of those who are dedicated and pledged to Allah at all times, human nature is in need of this reminder.

For more contextual substance on this matter, consider the real circumstances that led to the revelation of these *āyāt*. At the time the Prophet was absorbed in explaining Allah’s revelation to

the people, there were those Arabian elites who thought it was beneath them to respond favorably. Among themselves, they rationalized their elitist rejection by the fact that Muhammad (ﷺ) had surrounded himself with a collection of petitioners and paupers, the likes of Ṣuhayb, Bilāl, ‘Ammār, Khabbāb, Salmān, and Ibn Mas‘ūd. These early adherents of Islam and senior followers of the Prophet wore clothes tainted with their sweat and perspiration; they were so poor they could not afford to change into another set of clothes.³³² In the eyes of the Qurayshī upper class these indigents did not qualify to sit with the elites and the private-enterprise strata of Makkah. Thus, they tried to pressure the Prophet (ﷺ) into vacating or “getting rid of the scum” around him. When he refused, the Makkan aristocracy suggested that the Prophet hold one session with the elites and a “separate but equal” session with those “tramps.” In this manner these two opposite ends of society could avoid having any contact with one another.

The Makkan elite concocted this scheme not only because it believed its privileges to be a birthright, but more importantly to evade its responsibility to the disenfranchised underclass — a class whose very existence was predicated on the fact that privilege was both exclusive and exclusionary. There is a tendency in human nature, especially for those who find themselves on the short end of the power spectrum, to “get what you can,” that is, to be “practical,” “pragmatic,” or even “diplomatic” about principle and accept this discrimination for a short time while availing the “more important” opportunity to talk to the elites and convince them about Islam. But this tendency is arrested at its genesis as Allah (ﷻ) has an answer for people who think it is smart to be expedient or worldly-wise at the expense of principle, **“And do not [O Muhammad] eject [from your company] those who invoke their Sustainer morning and evening, seeking His aura.”** A narrative from Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ substantiates this class consciousness of the Makkan elite,

We were six in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ). It was then that the *mushriks* told the Prophet, “Expel these

[riffraff] from around you lest they breach our turf!” [The Makkan *mushriks* were referring] to me, Ibn Mas‘ūd, a man from [the tribe of] Hudhayl, Bilāl, and two other men whose names I will not mention. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was affected by that in his own way, the extent of which he only knows. Then Allah (ﷻ) disclosed [the *āyah*], “**And do not [O Muhammad] turf out those who call upon Allah sunup and sundown seeking His endorsement.**”³³³

That the upper-class Qurayshīs would express their disaffection and displeasure with the powerless and poor Muslims who had become the Prophet’s “inner circle” was not unexpected. It did not sit well with these affluent *mushriks* that dispossessed individuals were in the immediate care and courtesy of Muhammad (ﷺ). And so they embarked on maligning, in their judgement, the pathetic, second-rate, wretched, and deplorable individuals who heretofore had been left out in the cold because they were moneyless and without class status. The *mushriks* argued that the Prophet was only defeating himself by relying on the “roofless” and wretched of the earth, saying in effect that had it not been for this band of ruinous and castaway individuals, the Prophet would have had more popularity to ultimately win over the aristocrats and noblemen of Makkah. At psychological climaxes such as this, Allah’s (ﷻ) words guide man’s decisions,

You [O Muhammad] are not accountable for them [the less fortunate] and your account does not fall on them [the less fortunate] — you [O Muhammad] have no right to expel them: for then you would be among the wrongdoers (6:52).

The record is set straight: people carry their own burden and they are rewarded for their own deeds. In this vein, the Prophet (ﷺ) is responsible for his own self. The fact that the people who had committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ) and accepted the Prophet

were poor and penniless was a matter relating to their lives and how they managed them with Allah. At the time, there was not much the Prophet could have done about their poverty. Likewise, his own fortune or misfortune was his to deal with, and there was nothing much they could have done to help him out. Commitment to Allah eventually overrides these conditions as it puts into motion new dynamics that will, after years and maybe generations, correct this imbalance in society that exhibits outwardly as a snobbish upper class and a downtrodden lower class. Had the Prophet thrown out poor people from his company, he would not have been behaving in accordance with Allah's (ﷻ) values and principles. But to act incorrectly and oppressively would, in any case, have been impossible for Allah's Prophet (ﷺ).

By and large, as this is consistent with the mission of all prophets, those who had no wealth but were in possession of a fervent relationship with Allah and His Prophet kept the company of Rasūl-Allāh (ﷺ). This tight bond between the Prophet and the poor became an irritating saga in the unfolding history of a Makkan society that would in due course, after two decades of a long struggle, acclaim Islam and profess *īmān*.

As the months and years went by, during which the principled struggle of the Prophet withstood all pressures and managed to survive existential challenges, the patricians, noblemen, and rulers of Makkah began to question how Allah (ﷻ) could choose the underprivileged, the inferior of quality to be Muhammad's fellow-workers and friends? They deemed themselves to be prescient enough to answer their own questions, and hence they rationalized that if Muhammad (ﷺ) were preaching what is worthy and valuable then these "tramps and hobos" would not have earned it before them; Allah would have guided them before guiding the woeful and the miserable. They could not countenance the possibility that Allah would favor those pitiable low lives in exclusion to the people of wealth, status, and glory.

This is how ego and excess set up their possessors to become the victims of this kind of preposterous reasoning. Their absurd line of thinking indicates they do not understand this *dīn* and the new

world compass it brings. The rearrangement of human affairs begins with the fine-tuning of human nature so that it agrees with Allah (ﷻ). There is no religion, system, or ideology that goes as deep and then extends as far as the model observable in this Qur'an and Prophet. The psychology that turns down a prophet because of his humble company, along with its elitist and class representatives, are assessed by the Creator's words,

For it is in this way that We try out men through one another — to the end that they might ask, “Has Allah, then, conferred His favor upon those [pathetic] others in preference to us?” (6:53).

This will be the attitude of self-important people who cannot reconcile their internal selves with the less fortunate people in life. They are perplexed because they are steeped in arrogance when they should be overwhelmed by gratitude, **“Does not Allah know best as to who is grateful [to Him]?”**

This means that guidance, once given to humble people, almost always guarantees their gratitude; they will be forever thankful to Allah (ﷻ) for showing them the way and delivering them from temptation, deviation, and damnation. This also means that a commitment to Allah is never contingent on the earthly matters that preoccupy ungodly societies. The blessing of being dedicated and consumed by Allah was not and shall never be a “privilege,” especially one that is monopolized by the well-situated and the affluent. From Allah's “point-of-view,” the poor, the impoverished, and the paupers may ascend to a rank of honor dwarfing that of the rich and famous. The latter's objection to the way things are proceeding, seeing that the disenfranchised people are the ones who cluster around the Prophet (ﷺ), belies their ignorance of Allah's ways. Their contempt for and disgust with the underclasses is consistent with their disrespect and scorn for their Maker.

The lesson goes on to teach the Prophet (ﷺ) to initiate a congenial relationship with the deprived and destitute. This would mean that obedient Muslims are diametrically opposed to the social

attitudes of the upper classes of society toward the needy and the poverty-stricken. The good Book tells the committed Muslims to pass on to these people in society that Allah (ﷻ) has willed mercy and benevolence upon Himself, thereby giving any of them the opportunity to erase their bad deeds by doing good deeds and regretting whatever wrong they may have done in days and years past,

And when those who are committed to Our *āyāt* [as poor and impoverished as they are] come to you, say, “Peace be upon you, your Sustainer has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy — so that if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and lives righteously, He shall be [found] much-forgiving, merciful” (6:54).

A few more narratives from the time of the Prophet address the human psychology and social condition that are remedied by this lesson. Ibn Mas‘ūd relates,

The influential barons of Quraysh (*al-mala'*) called on the Prophet (ﷻ) while Ṣuhayb, ‘Ammār, Bilāl, and Khabbāb as well as other impoverished Muslims were there. These influential magnates said, “O Muhammad! Are you satisfied with these individuals from all your people? Are these the ones Allah has favored from among us? It shames us to be your followers the way they are your followers. Get rid of them. If you do so there is a chance that we follow you.” Thus [were revealed] the *āyāt*, **“And do not expel those who call upon their Sustainer night and day questing for His sanction... and it is in such a manner that we test men through other men...” (6:52–53).**³³⁴

After the *āyah* above was disclosed, the Prophet (ﷻ), when he would come upon these “underclass” Muslims, would initiate greeting them. He singled them out with the words, “*Thanks are due to*

Allah who has rendered in my Ummah those whom He orders me to take the lead in greeting."³³⁵ 'A'idh ibn 'Amr narrated the following,

Abū Sufyān came across Salmān, Ṣuhayb, and Bilāl as well as others. They said, "By Allah! Allah's swords have not yet exhausted their course from Allah's enemy." Then Abū Bakr said, "Do you say such a thing concerning Quraysh's senior and master?" He then went and told of this incident to the Prophet (ﷺ), who responded, "O Abū Bakr! You may have upset them. And if you did upset them you made Allah upset." So Abū Bakr went to them and said, "My dear brothers! Did I upset you?" They said, "No, may Allah forgive you, brother."³³⁶

Long before the weaving of contemporary socialist theories, the components of the same class dynamics were playing out in front of the members of an "ancient" society some 14 centuries ago. This lesson brings to the fore the issue of status. In the social sciences, status refers to an individual's social position, or the esteem in which he is held by others in society. Both within and between most occupations or social positions there is a status hierarchy. Status symbols, such as insignia of office or an expensive car, often accompany high status.

The two forms of social prestige may be separate or interlinked. Formal social status is attached to a certain social position, occupation, role, or office. Informal social status is based on an individual's own personal talents, skills, or personality. Sociologists distinguish between ascribed status, which is bestowed by birth, and achieved status, the result of one's own efforts. The German sociologist Max Weber analyzed social stratification in terms of three separate but interlinked dimensions: class, status, and power. Status is seen as a key influence on human behavior, on the way people evaluate themselves and others.³³⁷

In societies without a scriptural pulse and without guidance from Allah (ﷻ) there is what is known as *social mobility* — the movement of groups and individuals up and down the social scale

in a class-segregated society. The extent or range of social mobility varies in different societies. Individual social mobility may occur through education, marriage, talent, and so on; group mobility usually occurs through change in the occupational structure caused by new technological or economic developments. The caste system of India and the feudalism of medieval Europe are cited as examples of closed societies, where little social mobility was possible; the class system of Western industrial societies is considered relatively open and flexible.³³⁸

The caste (the Portuguese word *casta* means *race*) stratification of Hindu society consists of four main groups — Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (nobles and warriors), Vaisyas (traders and farmers), and Sudras (servants) — plus a fifth group, the Harijan (untouchables). No upward or downward mobility exists, as in other class-based societies. The system dates from ancient times, and there are more than 3,000 subdivisions. In Hindu tradition, the four main castes are said to have originated from the head, arms, thighs, and feet respectively of Brahma, the creator; the members of the fifth were probably the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, known variously as Scheduled Castes, Depressed Classes, Untouchables, or Harijan (a name coined by Gandhi, meaning *children of God*). This lowest caste typically handles animal products, garbage, and human wastes, and so is considered to be polluting by touch, or even by sight, to others. Discrimination against them, though it was made illegal in 1947 when India became independent, still persists.³³⁹

Exploring Class as a Vehicle of Human Exploitation

This lesson obviously carries within it allusions to the notion of *class*. Since today's political, educational, and theoretical scholars have been focused on class, and as much as certain Muslim intellectuals would prefer to avoid the subject altogether, it is important enough to the understanding of today's social milieu that the non-scriptural mind's deliberations on class ought to be explored in some detail.

In general usage the term *class* refers to classification — the partitioning or division of people or things into a series of categories, according to some criterion or common attribute. The word's etymological root derives from *classis*, which refers to Servius Tullius' division of the Roman people into six orders of taxation, from the established, tax-paying *assidui* to the poor *proletarii*, who "owned" or produced only their offspring (*proles*), but they in turn were superior to those only countable by head. By its very nature, classification emphasizes not only the equal position of those within the same class category, but more importantly the inequality between classes. It is therefore a natural vocabulary for social inequality.³⁴⁰

Sociological usage of the term is akin to common usage, but is more specific. "Class" features as an example of the more general concept of social stratification, the construction of the social world into *strata* or layers ordered (or "graded") according to one or more social attributes or scarce resources, typically wealth, prestige, purity, power, occupation, or rank. Implicitly, possession of these attributes is highly valued in the culture concerned; social classification could be based upon length of the index finger or hair color, for instance, but these attributes are unlikely to feature as valued attributes and hence serve as a basis for social stratification. Historically, such bases or "dimensions" have included occupational and ritual purity (Hindu castes), homage, and service (*subinfeudation* in the medieval western Estate system); a major basis for social differentiation in many societies has been slavery versus freedom. In modern industrial societies these bases are more usually economic ownership, occupational prestige, power, educational status, and community status.³⁴¹

The historical origin of social differentiation is obscure, but was clearly dependent upon the creation and differential control of surplus from agricultural societies, and usually built upon a basic divide, whether an ethnic “caste line” or a form of slavery, varying from total ownership, as in a chattel, to bond or debt slavery. Different terminology has been preferred in different periods and societies do refer to similar facts of social inequality: rank, order, station, and estate, all having a dated but historically-specific provenance (place of origin). Today’s terminology would more naturally include status and class. But a common differentiator is whether the social arrangement is considered harmonious, consensual (and often God-given), or expressing inherent conflict and incompatible interest — even Plato is reported as disapproving of the fact that the “undesirable” have higher fertility than “the best” in a society.³⁴²

The analysis of social class has been a particular concern of sociologists, developing from earlier work by political economists and concentrated classically upon economic organization that emerged in the Industrial Revolution. Adam Smith provides an excellent starting point for this tradition in his seminal work, *The Wealth of Nations* (1793). He addresses the classic economic problem of the distribution of wealth and division of labor by distinguishing those (classes) who live by rent, wages, and profit. With the reduced importance of agriculture and land in industrial society, this reduces to a bipolar opposition of interests (and implicit conflict) between those living from profit and interest and those dependent solely on wages.³⁴³

This is what forms the basis for Marx’s crucial, but unfinished, analysis of class, probably most accessibly advanced in *The Communist Manifesto*. Wedded initially to a Hegelian concept of alienation (especially in his early-1844 manuscripts), and to the “dialectic” as the mechanism for change, Marx puts class conflict at the forefront of his social analysis, as in his famous aphorism, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles” — following, that is, the Eden-like state of primitive communism, and to be superseded by the post-capitalist classless communist society. Class situations are defined by a group’s social

relationship to the means of production (basically, either ownership or exclusion from ownership.) Thus in capitalism the interests of the bourgeoisie are to exploit the proletariat, and the interests of the proletariat are to “expropriate the expropriators.” This provides the conditions for a class “in and of itself,” but only by recognition of its own interests, and the fact that these interests are inherently in contradiction to those of the other class. By means of the class-struggle does a class become a class “for itself,” with class consciousness and awareness, and pursuit of its own interests. Marx believed that this basic structure, of a dichotomous antagonistic opposition, characterized all class societies, which differed principally in what form the means of production took (the “mode” of production, for example, feudalism, capitalism). Although not a crude mechanist or determinist, he believed that progress toward a communist society was inevitable, and that the “contradictions” of capitalism were inherent in any class society.³⁴⁴

Marx’s incomplete analysis has left a legacy of suggested completion and revisionism, and however much the historical detail of his prognoses (such as the increasing pauperization of the proletariat) may be faulted, his influence on the political and sociological analysis of class has been colossal; many later theories have necessarily struggled with his ghost. This is especially true of the other major class theorist in sociology, Max Weber. Characterizing Marxian class as (economic) class, shared by those who share common life-chances and a common relationship to the market, Weber distinguished it analytically from *status*, the estimation of honor bestowed on positions (typically, but by no means exclusively, occupations in industrial society). In the British context, it needs no emphasizing that the wealth of the *parvenu* (nouveau riche) needs legitimation before it becomes recognized by higher, more established echelons. Indeed, where class and status are discordant, the preconditions exist for radical rejection of the basis of the system, rather than assimilation. Weber’s interests took him in a radically different direction from Marx, and he became especially concerned with the wider issue of the growth of rationality in industrial society (having its roots in the Protestant ethic, according

to his celebrated thesis) and with how the control and manifestation of power has become intricately bound up with bureaucratization in the modern world.³⁴⁵

In many ways, European sociology has followed the Marxian tradition whereas American sociology has followed Weber. In empirical studies of class and status, there has been a divergence: American studies and research have tended to concentrate on socio-economic status as a variable and Europeans have been more concerned with categorical class systems. In the former case, community-based studies have provided accounts of how the social standing of families and individuals relates to such characteristics as education, occupation, house type, and source of income. This has later been generalized to studies of occupational prestige to provide a quantitative scale of socio-economic status. British and European studies often have a more markedly Marxian flavor and tend to concentrate on social class as a categorical system (for example, the Registrar-General's five-class system in the UK), together with interest in subjective class awareness and class relations and with the question of the embourgeoisement of the working class in post-WWII societies.³⁴⁶

More recently these traditions have shown a degree of convergence, with social mobility and status achievement forming the common focus of interest. Much political, ideological (and social scientific) attention has been paid to why increasing class polarization has not occurred, and the role that "equality of opportunity" and the mechanism of education has played in increasing access to the higher echelons of society. Social mobility (or, more accurately, individual occupational mobility) has thus become the laboratory for many students of social stratification and the reigning paradigm in studies of class and stratification, though strongly contested by some Marxists and cognitivists. The effect of class on other aspects of social life has been extensively examined, and features as an independent variable in almost all sociological studies. The great majority of studies of class structure has been of the Western (and to a lesser extent the communist) industrial world, and it may well be that the effective forces of class formation and conflict are now

global, involving the Third World against the rest and probably the Western verses the Eastern ex-communist countries.³⁴⁷

In the Euro-American realm of social sciences, religion in general (and theology in particular) has relatively little to say about class *per se*, but this is principally because class as a measure to interpret the world is a fairly recent social science concept. The vocabulary used by Judeo-Christian theology is usually more akin to that of political economists and ethicists, concerned more with rank and (in)equality than with power, conflict, and stratification. Traditionally, Marxist analyses have been seen as (at best) inimical to Christian accounts (not least because of Marx's avowed materialist and atheist suppositions), and the Marxist desire not so much to interpret the world as to change it, putting it in a role of rival ideology. Nonetheless, Marxism in general and its class analysis in particular has had a degree of influence on areas of social theology (the extent to which papal social encyclicals utilize such notions is an eloquent testimony), and especially on "liberation theology." A number of attempts have been made to relate Marxist or neo-Marxist analyses to Christian theology, and class has probably been one of the more successful areas of debate. Some Christian perspectives accept the social/economic conditioning of religion but argue for a dialectical reciprocal influence (such as Weber's thesis on the relationship between the spirit of capitalism and the Protestant ethic) or distinguish institutional religion (thus effected) from the Christian ethic or incarnational theology. Others seek a common starting point in early-Marxian and Feuerbachian conceptions of alienation and its Christian counterpart. Yet others see Marxist analyses as giving a secular slant on Kingdom of God or eschatological ethics.³⁴⁸

The sociological analysis of religion both precedes and follows the Marxian interpretation, which sees it as an integral part of the class structure and also as being determined by it. The main (Judeo-Christian) theological defense against this position has been to concede much of the truth of the latter while questioning the former, and differentiating the causes of a belief — a legitimate scientific concern — from the reasons for holding it. The most explicit statement of this dual role is Marx's, "It is not the con-

sciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their social consciousness.”³⁴⁹

Then at the very least, Christianity, its historical formations, its institutional forms, and its theology, can be expected to bear the marks of its social and political creation and development. The most extensive development of this thesis comes from Weber's student, Ernst Troeltsch, whose magisterial work first developed in detail the relation between social and religious structure. During its two-volume course he developed, among other things, the ideal types of the church and the sect (and a more shadowy type, mysticism), showing how certain types of religious structure showed (or had a “selective affinity” for) associated distinctive types of social teaching and relationship to the world. Troeltsch, in using the Weberian “ideal type,” was anxious to stress that it was an analytic construct to which no actual organization may exactly conform, but he recognized (as his successors often forgot) that *both* structures were present in the early church, and sometimes still coexist. In Troeltsch's account, the *church* is a “natural” social structure into which members are born; it is inclusive in scope and universalistic in orientation. The *sect*, by contrast, is essentially a voluntary organization into which members are converted; it is exclusive and particularistic, making explicit demands of its members.³⁵⁰

The church/sect differentiation is also associated with typically divergent doctrines and ethics. The church has a high regard for sacraments (formal religious acts conferring special grace on those who receive it) as assured means of grace, has a wide range of class membership (but one biased toward the middle and upper classes), and has a trained clergy; it needs to emphasize its educational function, since this is its main form of recruitment, and it adopts a basic stance of accommodation to, compromise with, or directly support the established order. The sect on the other hand is more concerned with the “correct experience” of its members, recruits typically from the dispossessed, often forgoes regular clergy, and being in ascetic tension with “the world,” rejects any compromise with it. Troeltsch (and Weber) recognized the crucial sociological consequence of the sect being inherently unstable sociologically; it is essentially only

valid for one generation and once its members have children the “second generation” problem arises as conversion is no longer the only form of admission, and inevitably its structure and form of social teaching approximates that of the church. The class overtones of this topology are explicit in the recruitment and membership of the two types: above all, the sect appeals to and recruits from lower status groups and classes, while church membership is more typically recruited from the middle and upper classes.³⁵¹

The original church/sect distinction is too rudimentary to accommodate all the crucial aspects of religious organization, and it has undergone a good deal of development and refinement. Perhaps the most necessary religious structure to accommodate is the “denomination,” an essentially American organizational form occurring in a pluralistic society, which has become increasingly salient in the last few centuries. In American society, denominations have a far more restricted social base than their counterparts elsewhere, and an aggregated prestige ranking of churches exists (based primarily on the stage at which they arrived from Europe), which complements and reinforces the class structure. Thus while “Protestant,” “Catholic,” and “Jewish” represent the “triple (endogenous) melting pots” of equivalent ways to “be American,” there also exists a consistent ranking, with Unitarian, Episcopalian, and Congregationalist denominations enjoying considerably higher regard (and class recruitment, educational level, political preference) than Baptists, Catholics, and Pentecostals.³⁵²

In understanding denominations, H. Richard Niebuhr (brother of Reinhold) confessed himself driven to sociology,

The effort to distinguish churches primarily by reference to their doctrine and to approach the problem of church unity from a purely theological point of view appeared to (the author) to be a procedure so artificial and fruitless that he found himself compelled to turn from theology to history, sociology, and ethics for a more satisfactory account of denominational differences and a more significant approach to the question of union.³⁵³

In his analysis (1927), Niebuhr examines the structure of the denomination and proceeds to differentiate the “Churches of the Disinherited” from the “Churches of the Middle Class” as a way of making sense of doctrinal variation and social structure. The actual process of “denominationalization” (from sect to denomination) was well charted in a most interesting case study by Liston Pope (1942) in which increasing affluence (as a result of sect asceticism) was found to lead to more formal organization, a more extended appeal, and the employment of a full-time preacher. Even in European countries with histories of established churches, similar aspects are discernible. Thus, Methodism had considerable success in evangelizing the urban working classes (and in the process becoming a “labor aristocracy”), and Bishop Wickham (1951) showed with considerable historical flair that in England (or, more properly, in Sheffield), despite its universalistic claims, it was not that the Church of England had lost the working classes, it had never appealed to them for many generations.³⁵⁴

There can be no doubt that institutional religion is strongly differentiated, even conditioned, by social class in the West — but so are legal, political, and other social institutions. What makes the assertion disturbing to Christians is that it expressly contradicts the universalistic claims of Christianity, and (at least in its Marxian version) implicates religion in the creation and sustaining of power in society. The notion that religion is conditioned by social class in the West (used as a descriptive sociological notion) is not particularly disturbing; it would be hard to imagine the nature of a Western social institution that successfully avoided class conditioning. Even on the issue of relationship to the powers that be, there has always been a degree of ambiguity from St. Paul’s time up until the present. But the more extended universalistic claims of Christianity have made it particularly sensitive to the external criticism of being particularistic, serving special interests, allying itself with power, and compromising its pristine values — most of these being encapsulated in the notion of “class.”³⁵⁵

The Marxian account goes on to argue that these factors are not contingent but necessary, and that religion is itself a symptom

of class society and of alienation, which (like the state) will ultimately wither away at the advent of an eschatological communist society. At this point, the parallel often drawn between Christianity and Marxism as a secular religion is at its most obvious. Class analysis, then, owes its most explicit meaning and much of its force to the very specific philosophical, ideological (and, let it be said, ethical) system of Marxism, which saw itself as a (indeed, *the*) scientific system and as needing to combat religion as a false, derivative, and narcotic force (however much religion was also presented by Marx as “the heart of a heartless world,” an addition often ignored).³⁵⁶

But the Marxian account is far from acceptable from a social science viewpoint; it is incomplete, wrong in a number of its predictions and manifestly needing modification and change to cope (if it can) with the changes in capitalism itself, as Weber and all subsequent social scientists testify. Even in the more general and neutral sociological sense of class, there is a clear whiff of relativism and partiality in the assertion that institutional religion is class-conditioned, and a sociologically informed theology needs to confront not only the issues of power and class, but also that of status. “Invidious distinction,” “conspicuous consumption,” and forms of stratification internal to religious institutions (not least the non-theological and sociological aspects of the clergy-laity divide) are largely untouched by theological thought; and Niebuhr’s appeal that discussion about unity be informed by the sociological determinants of ecumenism and unity is still unanswered.³⁵⁷

Other areas in which class and class consciousness play a role in Western societies lie within the eruption of “liberation theology” and Church religious doctrine itself. Liberation theology focuses on various Christian theologies emphasizing social justice, freedom from oppression, and God’s liberating action in history, and calls for empowerment of the oppressed rather than charity from oppressors. In different forms, liberation theology has become a point of ecumenical convergence, relating diverse groups seeking economic and political justice. The movement can be understood through its background, major manifestations, and appraisal.³⁵⁸

Liberation and salvation, with theological and ethical dimensions, are central to most world religious traditions. Hinduism and Buddhism seek liberation from the round of rebirth. The Judeo-Christian tradition promises liberation from sin, oppression, and the fear of death. Greco-Roman thought speaks of liberation from life's ills and limitations, for example, Plato's myth of the cave. Biblical traditions have been the primary historical source for Western movements of liberation.³⁵⁹

As Western society emerged from its Middle Ages seeking liberation from ecclesiastical, political, and economic oppression, power shifted from autocratic rulers to the rising middle class. Revolutions usually took a federal form, with governments not overthrown but changed from centralized to republican control. Federalism (from the Latin word *foetus* for *covenant*) developed from federal theology and ethics and must be distinguished from liberalism, which is individualistic, optimistic about human nature, and dedicated to ideal democracy.³⁶⁰

In the 19th century, federal revolution as transformation of power structures was eclipsed by the Marxist conception of revolution as the overthrow of government. Whereas federalism sought liberation of the oppressed middle classes, Marxism intended liberation of the oppressed lower classes. Marxist revolutions have immediate liberating impact but tend to become static around gains achieved, whereas federal revolutions provide for continuing social change.³⁶¹ In one account of history in the West, federalism and related biblical traditions produced many social reforms: abolition of slavery, protection of labor, assistance to farmers, conservation of the natural environment, designation of the rights of women and children, improved treatment of racial and ethnic minorities, mass education, etc. In Protestant Christianity, these concerns merged into the Social Gospel and informed the ecumenical movement as it developed into the World Council of Churches. Roman Catholicism, allied with remnants of feudal autocracy until the late-19th century, began with Pope Leo XIII (*Rerum novarum*, 1891) to develop social teachings that since 1960 have emphasized liberation.³⁶²

A major milestone on the way to a recent manifestation of liberation theology was the civil rights movement in the United States. Based on concern for unjust treatment of African Americans, this movement forged tactics of protest against racial discrimination in the 1930s and 1940s, gained national attention in the 1950s as Martin Luther King, Jr. applied those tactics in the Montgomery bus boycott, won political success in the sweeping civil rights legislation of the early-1960s, and achieved international recognition when King received the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize.³⁶³

Liberation theologies build on traditions of social justice and experiences of oppression. Forms considered here include black, Third-World, feminist, and white,

1. Black liberation theology emerged from the shift in the 1960s from civil rights to black power. Civil rights goals were based around political and economic equality in an integrated society. Limited success brought increased power to African Americans and also disillusionment. Black power advocates rejected integration and affirmed “black is beautiful.” For African-American theologian James Cone (*A Black Theology of Liberation*, 1970), theology explicates “the meaning of God’s liberating activity so that those who labor under enslaving powers will see that the forces of liberation are the activity of God” and takes “the oppression of black people as a point of departure for analyzing God’s activity in contemporary America.” For Gayraud Wilmore oppression and blackness exemplify a “singular religiosity” present in many religions and point beyond Christian theology (*Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, 1972). Liberation theology comes also from other ethnic perspectives, for example, Vine Deloria in *God Is Red* (1973).³⁶⁴
2. Third-World liberation theology emerged from situations of oppression and exploitation in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, Jose Miguez-Bonino, Juan Luis Segundo, Allen Aubrey Boesak, and Kim Yong Bock, an understanding of biblical Christianity appears unlike that in most Western theology. First, theology must

- start with the poor and the oppressed because the God of biblical faith is on their side. Second, Marxist social analysis aids Christian theology and ethics by disclosing social conflict, systemic evil, and the necessity of commitment to societal change. Third, human liberation defines eschatological hope and historical reality as given in Christian faith.³⁶⁵
3. Feminist liberation theology developed in interaction with African-American and Third-World movements, emerging from women's experience of oppression, "the oldest form of oppression in human history" (Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power*, 1972). Some feminist theologians reject biblical faith as hopelessly patriarchal and turn to goddess symbols and traditions, for example, Mary Daly. Other feminist theologians seek to recover the prophetic, messianic power of the Bible as the basis of critique and theology, for example Rosemary Ruether, Letty M. Russell, and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel.³⁶⁶
 4. White liberation theology responds to and interprets black, Third-World, and feminist liberation theologies. White liberationists emphasize that North Atlantic white theologies are not normative for Christian theology and that the experience of oppression must be central. Frederick Herzog (*Liberation Theology: Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel*, 1972) writes, "Theology today must begin with an identification with the wretched of the earth... the marginal figures of life who are still struggling for personhood and dignity." Benjamin Reist asserts that whites must learn to be white with a sense of particularity and ethnic consciousness, knowing that all human groups are "equally present in the historical space that is human liberation" (*Theology in Red, White, and Black*, 1975). For Charles S. McCoy (*When Gods Change: Hope for Theology*, 1980), liberation has plural meanings related to different experiences of oppression, and pluralism is viewed as having liberating power within the faithful action of the covenant God.³⁶⁷

Liberation theology has made significant contributions to Christian thought and action. First, it emphasizes a new salvation as deliverance, with God leading humanity out of bondage. God's faithful action incarnate in Jesus Christ (✝) reveals a future filled with divine justice and love. Second, liberation theology affirms that solidarity with the poor, the perspective of the oppressed, and empowerment of the powerless are required to achieve social justice. Third, liberation theology relates Christian faith and Marxism so that both are useful for critique of feudal, capitalist, and socialist forms of oppression.³⁶⁸

Liberation theologies, however, are not without their endemic difficulties. First, the theology of revolution, by opposing military power with eschatological dreaming, often has aided oppressive regimes. Second, some liberation theologies have used Marxism not only for social analysis but have permitted it to displace biblical faith as an encompassing world view. Third, some view one liberation theology as the archetype (for example, black, Third-World, feminist, or some other), ignoring the oppression of other groups and the long history and diverse stories of human liberation throughout the world and among all peoples. Liberation theology was not invented by this generation, nor does it come from only one situation of oppression. Its differing manifestations in the past and around the globe today add richness to the liberation theme and power to the liberation movement.³⁶⁹

The significance of liberation theology lies in its protests against injustice, its articulation of the pain and hopes of oppressed peoples, and its continuing rediscovery of the eschatological anticipations of newness, change, and liberation as the shared experience of all humanity. Martin Luther King, Jr., informed by Gandhi as well as the biblical prophets and Jesus (✝), articulated clearly that liberation of the oppressed means liberation of the oppressor; that black liberation will accomplish white liberation; that the liberation of women will also free men; and that only as liberation is the cause of God can it be the hope of humanity.³⁷⁰

This excursion into the reactionary and uninformed manifestations of religion reveals how displeasing and iniquitous life can

become when wealth, status, prestige, power, and rank determine the nature of human relationships. Societies with these characteristics have no values. They generate their own internal tension. From time to time and from one historical frame to another these types of stratified societies build rationalizing arguments for their tribal high quality, racial favorable position, or class discrimination and gender bigotry. Their endemic divisive issues acquire a life of their own. The guidance in this lesson seeks to build human society on a classless and race-less foundation. Of those powerless people around the Prophet (ﷺ), some were not even Arabians and others did not come from the aristocratic elite. Most of them were poor and needy. They represented the antithesis of all class-conscious and race-conscious societies. Even today, 14 centuries after this model society in Makkah and Madinah, which is not a figment of some utopian imagination, so-called “progressive” and “liberal” societies have failed to overcome class discrimination and racial prejudice.

Contrast the equality and egalitarianism of Islam with the wealth-centered and the race-driven societies of the 21st century. What a difference! What a distance! The Islam of heaven, its Prophet (ﷺ) on earth, and the oppressed and poor people around him set the stage for the most significant transformation of human social interactions, not the least of which was the elimination of class and race as the reference points of bigotry and supremacy — a standard that has remained unchallenged until today. How timely it is, then, for people to reflect upon these *āyāt*,

And do not [O Muhammad] exclude those who call upon their Sustainer at daybreak and at nightfall seeking His visage. You are not to carry their [book of] accountability, and your [book of] accountability is not for them to carry, thus if you do exclude them [the poor and the oppressed] you will become an evildoer. And it is in such a manner [of class tension] that we test men against each other, so that some of them [the upper class, the elites] say, “Is it these [lowlives] whom

Allah has favored from among us?” But isn’t Allah the best to know [and acknowledge] those who are grateful [to Him]?

And if those who are committed to Our power manifestations [from among the oppressed] come to you [O Prophet] say [to them], “Peace be upon you. Your Sustainer has willed the law of grace and mercy upon Himself — those of you, who due to ignorance, do a wrong deed then repent thereafter and follow that up with good deeds, then [he will find] Allah is forgiving, merciful” (6:52–54).

This was the model behavior of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) with oppressed and “insignificant” people. He was told by Allah (ﷻ) to be agreeable and sociable with these poor people, and to be patient as he shared in their condition. He was the most honored of prophets, but his acclaim came not from the approval of the high and mighty on earth, but from the meek and modest who were oppressed along with him.

There is a tangible lesson on equality here — not something from the socio-political theories of utopians and idealists that gathers dust on library shelves. It champions the oppressed as they express their heartfelt feelings toward their former oppressors, as in the matter of Abū Sufyān, who was considered by some to be the prominent figure among Quraysh. Recall when they said that their swords had not finished the job in reference to the hostile positions of Abū Sufyān during the long years of war against the Prophet, the committed Muslims, and divinity. These oppressed Muslims were aware of the fact that Abū Sufyān was a *ṭaliq* — a person amnestied by the Prophet (ﷺ) along with thousands of others after the *fath* (mastery and liberation) of Makkah. They had eclipsed Abū Sufyān and his likes because they had spent their lives in an epic struggle for Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle. So when Abū Bakr chided them for venting their “raw” emotions about Abū Sufyān, the Prophet cautioned him against hurting their feelings. This is what led Abū Bakr to return to them and rekindle their common affinity and sol-

idity by asking, “My beloved brothers! Did I make you angry?” To which they replied, “No our brother! May Allah forgive you.”

This is brotherhood, equality, and freedom. What conceivably could have made this possible? How many fancy theories have human intellectuals produced about a state of essential equality and social equilibrium? Here, in one of those rare but real moments of history, the Prophet (ﷺ) as leader and guide lived with and in the emotions of his impoverished followers. It is said that life is life, people are people, the market is the market, and human nature is human nature; so, with that being the case, how could it be possible for the Prophet to deliver a resounding success at social equality then, while it eludes man today? Because... revelation and scripture do make a difference. The Prophet on authority from Allah (ﷻ) made a difference.

Human leaders have never implemented a program of brotherhood and system of equality to match the leadership period of Muhammad (ﷺ). Since then, things have gone downhill. The politics of discrimination, exclusion, and apartheid are the (dis)order of the day. In today’s “civilized” world, racism, sexism, and classism run amok. Close behind are the dystopian ideas of nationalism, socialism, and capitalism — all of which are saturated with discriminatory ideological formulations and, inevitably, abusive behavior. What stands out in the tumultuous history of man is that period when slaves and masters shed their inferiority and superiority dispositions, and came together as equals. This egalitarianism was achieved without physical miracles or any other supernatural interference in the laws of nature or man.

Men of courage and principle need to step up and assert that today’s “civilization” dresses up social polarization, now at an all-time high, with mesmerizing, but nonetheless misleading, words about social equality. Contemporary Western civilization has never seen a moment where the underclass, the oppressed, and the powerless belonged to the immediate circle and company of the leader, as was the case in the *āyah* above where the prophet-leader refused to part company with the likes of ‘Ammār, Bilāl, Khabbāb, Ṣuhayb, and other impoverished Muslims. Western materialistic civilization

has produced instead a struggle for the soul of the modern worker, which has been going on ever since that fractured creature was estranged from the land and forced to sell its creative energy in order to eat. This struggle continues today — between those who would assimilate workers fully into the market economy, as sellers of a service (that is, labor), and those who would not, highlighting the workers' distinction in being, at one and the same time, a means of production and, as key consumer, its primary object. Neither side has won. The assimilationists might claim tactical advantage in the United States, for example, but they would have to concede temporary defeat in say, Poland or South Korea.

The workers' collective experience or apartness, as expressed in strikes or through lockouts, appears to be the main focus. Employing this indicator as a measure of social progress, however, is extremely crude. In reality, strikes and lockouts can express high commitment in either or both of the contending sides, or simple convenience; they can be contract-end set pieces, or spontaneous explosions of exasperation; they can be demonstrations measured in hours, or long open-ended battles; they can be of general interest, or of significance to only a handful of people; they can be isolated, or supported from outside; and they can be fought on bread-and-butter issues, or on issues of principle or politics. They can be almost anything one can imagine, but arguably their very existence is a symptom of irritation, an indication that the fit between worker and market, between labor and management is not entirely sanguine.³⁷¹

The uncomfortable space between the upper class and the lower classes, between the workers and the employers, private or state, who preside over the market, is inhabited by trade unions. They too come in many forms and fulfill many functions, from spearheading protest to containing it. All do both, but some do more of the one, some more of the other, as anyone following these trends can observe. There is little that holds true of all trade unions, except perhaps that none is truly free and none totally a creature of the state (judgements are bound to differ). For that reason alone, their very existence — even in the most controlled,

corrupt, and spineless embodiment, and even if their members are peer pressured into them by party, state, or employer — promotes among these members a sense of distinctiveness.³⁷²

The current generation can look back at the 20th century to see how all types of theories, experiments, and systems tried to do what the Prophet (ﷺ) did when he crippled discrimination and refused to concede to the prejudices of the upper class. All these 20th-century programs and paradigms failed to bring about a classless society. Man’s human, natural, basic, and social rights are violated in this modern civilization with apparent impunity.

When will man ever learn? The lesson is not hard to absorb. One need only look at the features of a godless civilization and draw his own conclusions. A world under the auspices of Western civilization has known recurring and widespread massacres, genocides, population transfers, world wars, the dropping of atomic bombs, and a nuclear arms race. None of these or their equivalents have been a part of Islamic history.

“And thus clearly do We spell out Our *āyāt* — and [We do it] so that the path of those who are criminals might become distinct.” This is important. The Qur’anic composition is not only meant to show human beings the direction forward; it also sheds light on the path of deviation and destruction lest they step into that direction. Committed Muslims of Qur’anic conviction should be able to see, apprehend, and ascertain a false direction when they are exposed to it. The foes of Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle are numerous, clever, and subtle. Therefore, the Muslims whose mettle is the Qur’an should be able to distinguish a course of action that leads to heaven from one that leads to hell. Muslims engaging the will of Allah on earth should be able to see through the plots of their implacable enemies, **“And it is in such a manner that We have rendered to every prophet enemies who are criminal” (25:31).**

“Crime” may have its secular definitions, but the divine definition of crime fits those people, institutions, or governments that direct their hostility toward prophets and their followers. This is the vivid distinction between Muhammad (ﷺ) and his followers — the bloc of struggling and humble Muslims — on one side and a

camp of power mongers and arrogant *mushriks* on the other. The overall picture has to be brought into focus; and the committed Muslims have to muster the civic courage to publicly declare that the *mushriks* are criminals. The latter's psychology seeds their criminality as they refuse to even be in the presence of the downtrodden and the wretched of the earth. Thus, the inclusivist course of committed Muslims is clear and it should be made clear whenever there are attempts to fudge this issue; while the exclusivist course of the *mushriks* is also clear insofar as they are biased and prejudiced.

The problem with today's "Islamic" public mind is its inability to take a hard look at the systemic *shirk* in its countries and realize how hostile this *shirk* is to what the Islamic *dīn* stands for. Failing this task, it has fallen short in pronouncing the word *criminals* upon the maintainers and upholders of these governments of *shirk*. An affirmation of Allah's (ﷻ) justice is humanly demonstrated by the equality of His human beings here on earth. And that is something the committed Muslims will have to successfully bring about. Otherwise, there will be no social justice. A *dīn* without social justice is not Islam, and Muslims without social justice are not really Muslims, especially when they wed their Islamic rituals to a tacit or inattentive approval of racism, class discrimination, and gender apartheid.

If there is ever to be an original and sustainable Islamic movement, there has to be a clear demarcation line between the Muslims' Islam of social justice and other people's systems of social injustice. The obfuscation of this issue cannot be allowed to continue, especially by Muslims. We know that Islam has been set into molds of tradition that are hundreds of years old, we know that Muslims have been "getting away with the full honors of *īmān*, just because they pray, fast, and perform their personal rituals." We also know that there is much more to our Islamic duties and responsibilities than to run water over our bodies for *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* while there are regimes running acid over the bodies of committed Muslims who are living the struggle and dying for it. We likewise know that traditions and customs are not easy to undo, especially if they have been accumulating for over a millennium. But there will be a time in the near future when the "Islamic conscience" will break

out of its traditionalist mold and shatter the shell of customs around it.

A fresh start of Islamic activism requires a thoroughly clear definition of what the Muslims stand for and what their criminal opponents stand for. The least the Muslims can do is to give a clear explanation of the facts — and one of those facts is that Muslims in the Muhammadi model cannot simultaneously belong to the *mushriks'* social system. Saying that today's multitudes of Muslims are less Islamic, pseudo-Islamic, or nominally Islamic only sugar-coats the reality that today's populations of Muslims are deniers of Allah (ﷻ).

Islam is clear and *kufir* is clear. There never was, and there will never be, a position whereby a person can straddle both Islam and *kufir*, and then claim he is a bona fide and true-to-life Muslim. In the shaping years of Makkah and Madinah while the Prophet (ﷺ) was setting the pace, there were indeed some borderline or titular Muslims whose bodies were always around the Messenger, but whose souls were in bed with the *kāfirs*. These would eventually evolve into the character of *nifāq* (dual loyalty), a character that would surface at critical times when the committed Muslims themselves were in possession of power and authority after moving from Makkah to Madinah. The progress of an Islamic order is contingent upon the will of Allah (ﷻ). No Muslim should try to appease those in wealth and power by excluding the company of those who are in poverty and powerlessness. The following *āyah* corroborates this meaning,

Have self-patience with those who call upon their Sustainer at the beginning and the end of day seeking His visage, and let not your eyes lurch away from them in a quest for the adornment of worldly life; and do not obey any whose heart We have rendered heedless of all consciousness of Us, because he had always followed [only] his own desires, thereby straggling [spreading out in an irregular, untidy way] his own affair (18:28).

Power and Reverence Belong to Allah (ﷻ)

In the preceding lesson there was a standoff between the Prophet (ﷺ) who, as a matter of principle and equality, would not part with the lower class in society on one side, and the *mushriks* who wanted him to give the poor an accommodation by dismissing them on the other side. In a sense, the *mushriks* wanted the Prophet to adjust to their expectations and to observe their “standards.” But of course the instructions from on high were clear and the Prophet thus refused to accept a “class distinction” or a “class consciousness” within his divinely-inspired civil society.

The next suite of *āyāt* elucidate Allah’s (ﷻ) divinity and authority. The first manifestation of this was exemplified by the Prophet’s confidence in Allah as he proceeded with his responsibilities undeterred by the demands of ignorant *mushriks* and a hostile camp of opponents. Secondly, the prerogative to act or not to act belongs to Allah, and hence He did not answer the *mushriks*’ petition for “an act of God” that would prove His involvement in the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ). Thirdly, Allah’s divinity and authority is conveyed through His sole knowledge of the *ghayb*. Fourthly, Allah alone has the power to direct lively conditions and determine human circumstances and specifications. And finally, Allah’s divinity and authority dawn on His deniers when they are in mortal danger, at a time and place when they can call on none but Him to save them from the clutches of death, even though after the danger has dissipated they generally tend to go back to their state of denial and affirmation of *shirk*.

- (6:56) Say [to the deniers of truth], “Behold, I have been forbidden to conform to those [beings] whom you invoke instead of Allah.” Say, “I do not follow your errant views — or else I should have gone astray, and should not be among those who have found the right path.”
- (6:57) Say, “Behold, I take my stand on a clear evidence from my Sustainer — and [so] it is to Him that you are giving the lie! Not in my power is that which [in your ignorance]

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا أُبْعِدُكُمْ عَنْ آلِهَتِكُمْ إِذَآ وَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مُجْرِبِينَ عَلَيْهِمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعِجِلُونَ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَفْضُلُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَصِيلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعِجِلُونَ بِهِ لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَةٍ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُمْ بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْرِطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ رُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ أَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِّنْ ظِلْمَتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ نَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لِّئِنْ أَجَبْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ اللَّهُ

يُنَجِّكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ
 أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلِيَسَّكُمْ
 شَيْعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَعْضًا أُنظُرُ كَيْفَ نَصَرِفُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

you so hastily demand: judgement rests with none but Allah. He shall declare the truth, since it is He who is the best judge [between truth and falsehood].”

- (6:58) Say, “If that which you so hastily demand were in my power, everything would indeed have been decided between me and you [the *mushriks*]. But Allah knows best as to who is doing wrong.”
- (6:59) For, with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being’s perception: none knows them but He. And He knows all that is on land and in the sea; and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth’s deep darkness, nor anything living or dead, but is recorded in [His] clear decree.
- (6:60) And He it is who causes you to be inanimate at night, and knows what you work in daytime; and He reanimates you each day in order that a term set [by Him] be fulfilled. In the end, unto Him you must return: and then He will make you understand all that you were doing [in life].
- (6:61) And He alone holds sway over His subjects. And He sends forth heavenly forces to watch over you until, when death approaches any of you, Our messengers cause his earthly life to come to an end: and they do not overlook [anyone].

- (6:62) And they are thereupon brought back before Allah, their true Lord Supreme. Oh verily, His alone is all judgement. And He is the swiftest of all reckoners!
- (6:63) Say, “Who is it that saves you from the dark dangers of land and sea [when] you call unto Him humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts, ‘If He will but save us from this [distress], we shall most certainly be among the grateful?’”
- (6:64) Say, “Allah [alone] can save you from this and from every distress — and still you ascribe divinity/authority to other powers beside Him!”
- (6:65) Say, “It is He alone who has the power to let loose upon you suffering from above or from beneath your feet, or to confound you with mutual discord and let you taste the fear of one another.” Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth (al-An‘ām:56–65).

The first thing that captures the attention is the occurrence of the word *qul* (*say*), which appears four times in the first three *āyāt*. Thus, the Prophet is speaking Allah’s words,

Say [O Muhammad, to the deniers of truth], “Behold, I have been banned from adapting to those [beings] whom you invoke to the exclusion of Allah.” *Say*, “I do not follow your desires — or else I should have gone astray, and should not be among those who have found the right course [of action].” *Say*, “Behold, I have evidence from my Sustainer — though you dispute it, I cannot deliver on your hasty demands. The ruling rests with none other than Allah who details the *ḥaqq*; and He is the best differentiator. *Say*, “If that which you demand in haste were in my power, everything would indeed have been decided between me and you. But Allah knows best as to who are the felons (6:56–58).

The message from Allah (ﷻ) describing the appropriate human devotion to divinity refuses to consider all the other beings and things that interfere with this relationship and demean God Himself. Therefore, the *mushriks* should be on notice that the Prophet (ﷺ) and all his followers will not, and will never, raise anyone or anything to the rank of divinity, and correspondingly they will not degrade God by disputing His authority. And from understanding these *āyāt* it appears that human tendencies and earthly inclinations are what account for their “God without authority.” There is no well-established scientific basis for their world of a god who is subject to human priorities and whims. Man’s relationship with Allah tolerates no vagaries and no eccentricities, as such assumptions lead to no salvation or recovery.

This may seem easy to say theoretically and it may seem even easier because there is a time span of 14 centuries between the revelation of the Qur’an and man today. But this is a good description of modern reality. Power centers, well-established institutes, governmental structures, and almost all institutions of the world fit within a military-industrial-banking complex that has its own definition of God, its own explanation of divinity, and its own description of authority — none of which is accurate, true, or valid, and all of which denude God of His authority and dominance. But where are the scions of scripture and the products of prophethood who are willing to stand for Allah (ﷻ), the Authority, in contradistinction to the mainstream meaning of God or the “popular” notion of divinity? In many passages of this Qur’an, Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) debunks their false ideas of God and their false deities, to wit the *āyah* earlier in this *sūrah*,

Are you indeed going to testify that there are beside Allah other deities? Say [O Muhammad], “I will not testify.” Say, “But He is One Deity; and I am absolved of your acts of *shirk*” (6:19).

The *mushriks* went even further in their attempts to delegitimize and downplay this *dīn* of Islam. They, in the true tradition of liber-

alism, offered the Prophet a reciprocity: that he agree to go along with their existing system (*dīn*) for a set time period and then they would agree to follow his system (*dīn*) for an equivalent time period. They were willing to prostrate themselves to Allah if Muhammad (ﷺ) would honor their deities. What a preposterous offer! Is it possible for *shirk* and Islam to coexist? Can life function under two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive systems? Impossible. One cannot be selfless for Allah (ﷻ) while being selfish for other lords. No sincere heart can divide itself by belonging to Allah one year and belonging to other gods another year.

While speaking about conformity to others beside Allah (ﷻ), the *āyah* invites attention to the use of the word *al-ladhīna*, “Say [to the deniers of truth], ‘Behold, I have been forbidden to conform to those [mortal beings] whom you invoke instead of Allah.’” The word *al-ladhīna* (*those*) refers to thinking beings; had the intended meaning been a reference to idols and graven images the word *mā* (non-thinking beings or objects) would have been used. Thus, the *āyah* is alluding to the fact that the occupiers of “divinity” and “authority” in man’s life to the exclusion of Allah are intelligent and perceptive beings.

Islamic history informs that the *mushriks* were not guilty of raising only idols and icons to the position of divinity; they also raised the jinn, angels, and people to this position. And when they raised people to such a godly position they did so by giving them the license to write laws and thereby regulate society and life. This is considered *shirk*. Anytime individuals become lawmakers and people become lawgivers, they by definition act as gods. This deification of humans is as serious as the deification of stones and material objects. Thus, prostrating oneself to an idol is as profaning of God as accepting and living by the laws of man to the exclusion of or in contradiction to the laws of Allah (ﷻ). Both are forms of *shirk* and both are demeaning of God. This human mindset leads to words of confidence and a statement of facts,

Say, “Behold, I take my stand on clear evidence from my Sustainer — and [so] it is to Him that you are giving

the lie! Not in my power is that which [in your ignorance] you so hastily demand: the ruling [in this matter and other matters] rests with none but Allah. He shall outline the truth, since He is the best to do so (6:57).

With the force of the power structure and all the fanfare the *mushriks* could leverage, the Prophet (ﷺ) only had the truth; and with that truth he went public — without doubts, second thoughts, or an inferiority complex. His psychology was robust, his character was assuring, and his words were Allah’s. This quality appears through the lives of all Prophets (ﷺ),

Said [Nūḥ], “O my people! What do you think? If [it be true that] I am taking my stand on a clear evidence from my Sustainer, who has vouchsafed to me grace from Himself — [a revelation] to which you have remained blind — [if this be true], can we force it on you even though it be hateful to you?” (11:28);

Said [Ṣāliḥ], “O my people! What do you think? If [it be true that] I am taking my stand on a clear evidence from my Sustainer, who has vouchsafed to me grace from Himself — [if this be true], who would shield me from Allah were I to rebel against Him? Hence, what you are offering me is no more than perdition!” (11:63);

And his [Ibrāhīm’s] people argued with him. He said, “Do you argue with me about Allah, when it is He who has guided me?” (6:80);

But when the bearer of good tidings came [with Yūsuf’s tunic], he laid it over his face; and he [Ya‘qūb] regained his sight, [and] exclaimed, “Did I not tell you, ‘Verily, I know, from Allah, something that you do not know?’” (12:96).

Prophets Are Not Gods

Some facts in life do not draw the close scrutiny they merit; among them is that prophets and inspired people of God feel Allah (ﷻ) down to the very depths of their selves, souls, and state of nature. Similarly, there are opponents of prophets and scripture who cannot sense or are unwilling to concede the fact that other people are as sure of God as they are of their own existence. The reality or the actuality of God has been so blurred or seriously damaged in their lives — and a thousand reasons could account for their doubts — that they will argue and fight to keep God away from shaping the general direction of society. Their deep-rooted hostility toward the heavens has often signaled their troops to quash any movement for a God-defined moral and legal society. In our times, or at least in recent years, the influence of God-deniers upon the general population has been overwhelming. They have provided no room for an open debate on the issue, especially in Muslims countries where anyone or any movement with a mentally thought-out program has been reflexively declared an “enemy of the state.” The tide is definitely turning now as there are many indications that the near future will see an about-face to the long night of *kufri*, secularism, and sacrilege. Those who are certain of Allah (ﷻ) are making progress. Their input to life and contribution to existence stems from the spoken words of the Qur’an, **“Say, ‘Behold, I take my stand on a clear evidence from my Sustainer — even though you [His deniers, try to] confute Him.’”**

The naysayers about Allah always display a bully attitude. They, in denigrating their prophets, demand either miracles or an expediting of the inevitable doom they have incurred. They do this to verify, in their own minds, the truth these prophets have been uttering. Allah gives an answer to their pestering demands, but not the one they expected; He explains to them the reality of the Message and the role of His Messenger (ﷺ), as well as the demarcating line between prophethood and divinity. Thus, the Prophet publicly and politely explained that he is not able to produce miracles or advance their doomsday. The only one who can do such a thing is Allah — and Allah alone. The Prophet “apologized” — he is not

God. He is only a messenger, **“Not in my power is that which you [in your ignorance] want to happen immediately; ruling [in this matter and other matters] rests with none but Allah. He details the *ḥaqq*, and He is the best to do so.”**

People should understand that if Allah (ﷻ) were to respond to their demands of producing the miracles they are asking for, and then they refuse to confirm Him as a necessary precondition, then they will incur His punishment forthwith. This inevitable scenario of sorting out the committed Muslims from the arrogant *kāfirs* — and this is for the benefit of the Muslims themselves — is attended by its own multifaceted details that are exhausted by Allah’s (ﷻ) supervision of circumstances. No human entity has the capacity to achieve this because of the nearly infinite variables associated with this dynamic — variables that are both within and beyond the reach of human perception.

The Prophet (ﷺ) made it very clear that he was not an agent or executor of Allah’s will when it comes to the divine decree to punish or obliterate a society. The task of the Prophet was to communicate and clarify the message, the revelation, the scripture. He was not there to strike down societies when they were in opposition to Allah (ﷻ); that is Allah’s declaration and decree, not the Prophet’s. Those who refuse to affirm and abide by Allah’s authority voluntarily will eventually encounter His authority with difficulty when they, in time, bring upon themselves His final judgement.

It is a function of Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy that His antagonists are not immediately swept away — by natural or social disasters — in their first phase of rejecting Him. No human being, even a prophet, has been equipped with the level of temperance necessary to resist inflicting the enemies of Allah with a use of force that is proportionate to their arrogance and enmity, **“Say, ‘If that which you in haste demand were in my power, everything would certainly have been decided between me and you. But Allah knows best as to who are the wrongdoers.’”**

Social human beings have a limit to their perseverance, patience, and permissiveness. The magnitude of resistance and defiance of Allah (ﷻ) by *kāfirs* is liable to even get on a “perfect”

person's nerves, and after a short while he would wish that these *kāfirs* were finished off — one way or another. But it is Allah's longanimity and wellspring of tolerance that measures the human response to Him and then calculates the accurate consequences — without emotions and without reactions, as is apt to be the case with mortal beings.

A Muslim who is in the midst of a struggle — sacrificing, “losing” time and effort, not seeming to be making considerable progress — would want to “show these *kāfirs*” who is on the right side of this issue. At the same time, however, this same committed Muslim would not be unaware of the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is accommodating these *kāfirs* in His domain, that they are being fed, that they live “a good life,” and that sometimes the worst of them are living in a “paradise on earth.” And this contrast may cause him to be impetuous and reckless; so it is best to leave the matter in Allah's capable hands. Hence, the *kāfirs*, even though they are unlikely to recognize it right away due to their enduring defiance of Allah, are slowly but surely walking into their own demise. Allah is allowing them to gradually self-destruct, **“And Allah knows best as to who is doing wrong.”** And as with individuals, so with their social orders: the affluent time period of nations and the comfortable age of societies is, with precision and accuracy, calculated and noted by Allah.

The Expanse of God's Knowledge Cannot Be Taken Lightly

The towering words of this thematic Qur'an put subordinate man on notice as to Allah's (ﷻ) knowledge that spreads into and contains the *ghayb*,

For, with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being's perception: none knows them but He. And He knows all that is on land and in the sea; and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything living or dead, but is recorded in [His] evident register (6:59).

Here is an *āyah* that dwells on an area generally swept under the rug in today's "enlightened" and "scientific" world: the unending and infinite information, knowledge, and perception that Allah possesses compared to the limited and superficial knowledge at man's disposal. Only an arrogant and egotistical creature would not concede the fact that there are things lying well beyond the human capacity of observation, detection, and sensory perception. In the Qur'anic terminology this area is called the *ghayb* (the obscure reality). The *āyah* teaches that Allah (ﷻ), in fact, knows all these undisclosed and hidden facts. Thinking humans, lacking enough definitive information on matters that are in the realm of the *ghayb*, try to give these phenomena the best description they can, hence the familiar terminology, *UFO encounters*, *search for the soul*, *mind over matter*, *mysterious creatures*, *hauntings*, *cosmic connections*, *psychic powers*, *visions* and *prophecies*, and *powers of healing* among others. All of these areas are, by and large, unknown to man's collective experience and history. But Allah knows this whole realm of the *ghayb* very well, **"For, with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being's perception: none knows them but He."** The "mysteries of the unexplained" are mysterious and unexplainable insofar as the information-challenged are concerned, but to Allah there is no mystery and nothing is unexplained,

And He knows all that is on land in the sea; and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything living or dead, but is recorded in [His] evident account [of things] (6:59).

Many factors make Earth a unique planet. Its atmosphere, oceans, moving plates, escaping gases, diverse life forms, soils, and the presence of humans all contribute to a distinctive biophysical system. Above all else, it is the dynamic, ever-changing ways in which the air, land, and oceans interact that create particular landscapes available for human use and abuse. From the equator to the poles, from the peaks of mountains to the depths of ocean basins,

plants and animals go through their life cycles nurtured by the climates and the nutrients in soils and waters. Yet what is observable today has not always been present. The world inhabited by humans has been transformed in ways that science can only speculate.

Unraveling earth's developmental history is a difficult proposition. Geologists and paleontologists are not unlike detectives. They are required to piece together fragmentary evidence using their imagination, and their sense of adventure and curiosity, exploring the world and discovering for themselves what has happened in the past. Some geologists have had the ability to synthesize large bodies of information and develop generalized histories from field observations and interpretations. Increasingly, new technologies, including the capacity to calculate accurately the age of rocks using radiometric dating methods, have escorted the scientific community to new vistas of thought, allowing the testing of theories such as that of continental drift.³⁷³

Discoveries of magnetic reversals in rocks on the floor of oceans, the volcanic character of mid-oceanic ridges, and the age of oceanic basalts covered by a veneer of geologically young sediment, have contributed to an understanding of the processes of sea-floor spreading and hence to the development of plate tectonic theory. This is considered to be one of the most remarkable scientific advances of the 20th century. It formalized the grand dreams of those who could see evidence for the validity of continental drift theory in the rock record and in the distribution of plants and animals. Yet, for decades, these geologists and biologists were not able to convince the skeptics, because they had no mechanism to explain the movement of the relatively light continental crust over vast distances. New research in ocean research changed all that; with plate tectonics, it is possible to explain much more satisfactorily the formation of mountains, as well as the distribution of earthquakes, volcanoes and many life forms.³⁷⁴

Plants and animals, or biota, occur in particular groups, reflecting their adaptation to each other and to the environment. Interaction of biota with climatic, soil, landform, and other conditions has been the subject of much ecological discovery. Competition

and predation (the act of plundering) are just two of the ways in which species function — on a range of scales from microorganisms in the soil to whales at sea. On land and in the ocean, there are clear regional groupings of biota that contribute to the differences between places. But even these differences are not static as they too seem to the scientific eye to be subject to change.³⁷⁵

Our human observation of the on-going physical laws that have preserved the earth for human life and habitat for so long is basically inconsequential. Changes in climate, for instance, whether it be over millions of years or tens of years, require organisms to adjust. On a global scale, it is possible to document periods of earth cooling and the consequent expansion of ice sheets and falls in sea level. Scientific “scratching-the-surface” information indicates that vast areas of Europe and North America were under one kilometer (approximately 3,280 ft) of ice as little as 15,000 years ago. Yet, the earth warmed, and the glaciers retreated. Today, these areas are home to millions of people.³⁷⁶

Rising sea levels flooded continental shelves and river valleys, creating new habitats for plants and animals; in the fertile deltaic plains of many countries, for instance. Understanding why these and other, smaller scale climatic fluctuations, such as the El Niño phenomenon, occur is still the subject of much scientific debate. Against the background of natural variability in climate, another factor comes into play: the impact of humans disturbing the chemistry of the atmosphere and inducing global climate disruption, or the greenhouse effect.³⁷⁷

Plants, animals, and human productivity are highly dependent on the state of soils. Continental rocks are of varied chemical composition; on exposure to the atmosphere, they disintegrate or weather into different mixtures of mineral matter combined with decayed matter from plants and animals. The close interrelationship between soils and climate, vegetation, landforms, and rock type is well known among certain scientists, and this knowledge has helped in the development of crops that can be grown successfully in different soils. Again, however, people have to learn to deal with lands that have become transformed as soils are overused and ex-

ploited, losing their productive capacity and causing populations to decline and migrate.³⁷⁸

Landscapes derived from the changing yet distinctive combinations of these biophysical factors constitute part of the human inheritance. Increasingly, man is beginning to recognize his responsibility toward the management or stewardship of this heritage.³⁷⁹

“And He knows all that is on land and in the sea...” Earth’s surface is constantly being transformed by falling rain, glaciers, rivers, underground water, wind, and waves. These constantly erode the land, transporting debris and depositing it elsewhere. The land is molded into new forms through erosion, and new landforms are also created by the deposition of eroded debris.³⁸⁰

For, with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being’s perception: none knows them but He. And He knows all that is on land and in the sea; and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth’s deep darkness, nor anything living or dead, but is recorded in [His] clear record (6:59).

This development of the standoff between the Prophet (ﷺ) and those in his society who turned against him puts all humanity at a juncture: are people willing to concede Allah’s infinite, absolute, and reference knowledge about everything known and unknown to them; or are they going to get carried away by their acquisition of a minuscule amount of knowledge or “science,” thinking they have conquered nature and outdated God?! From reading and understanding this Book of truth, man has no option but to be humble enough, and indeed he should be, to confess to his finite knowledge and to Allah’s infinite knowledge and information. Man has the obligation to publicly and proudly proclaim that he is cognizant of his limitations and hence what he does not know is much, much more than what he does know. The element of the *ghayb* is essential to man’s relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and to how he processes the information he obtains through discoveries, investigations, research,

experiments, and revelation. His faithful commitment to Allah has to include this acknowledgment of the *ghayb*,

Alif-Lām-Mīm. This Book around which there is no doubt is a guidance to those who are on guard concerning Allah’s power — those who are dependably certain of the *ghayb*, who raise their *ṣalāh* to become the standard [of life], and who spend out of what We have provided for them; and those who are committed to what has been bestowed upon you [O Muhammad] and to that which has been revealed before you, and who are foolproof certain of the end-life. They it is who are on a course of guidance from their Sustainer, and it is they who are successful (2:1–5).

In sorting through the various aspects of our overall relationship with Allah (ﷻ), our covenant with Him, our commitment to Him, our abiding by Him, and our faith in Him are all inclusively infused with our certitude of the reality of the *ghayb*. We cannot subject Allah to our senses but we can acknowledge Him through the evidence, proof, and clues that are abundant in existence around us, provided we open our minds and shelve our presumptions. Our certainty about the life to come is a certainty about an aspect of this *ghayb*. The unfolding details of resurrection, accountability, reward and punishment — all of these — are integral to this *ghayb* that Allah makes us aware of.

Other details of this *ghayb* are made evident to man courtesy of this informative Book,

The Apostle is committed to that which has been bestowed upon him by his Sustainer, and so are the entrusted [committed] Muslims. All are reliably committed to Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His apostles. We do not discriminate between any of them. And they say, “We hear and we obey. Grant us forgiveness our Lord and to you is [our] destiny” (2:285).

Even our passing reflection on the subject would suggest that this *ghayb* is preponderant and everywhere. History, in the strict sense of the word, is *ghayb*. The future itself is *ghayb*. In our very bodies and physical structure there are things we do not know, hence *ghayb*. The millions of light years away from us out there in the remote parts of the universe is yet another *ghayb*. Even in the limited body of information we have access to, there are unknowns, and that is also *ghayb*. In our daily lives there are hundreds and thousands of unknowns. We are surrounded by a universe of unknowns. If only we would listen and learn,

And He has the keys to the unknown, no one knows it except He... (6:59);

And what you [humans] have been given of knowledge is trivial (17:85);

They do not but follow conjecture and self-desires; even as guidance has come to them from their Sustainer... (53:23).

How is it imaginable for puny little man to develop arguments and theories against this overwhelming knowledge of Allah (ﷻ)? How does he extend this petulant insouciance into spurning the authority of Allah? We are now living in a period of time when the “educated class” of people, so over-impressed by their science, have argued that God no longer exists. Acquiring a petty, nickel-and-dime amount of information, they think they are the ultimate authorities, not only on earth, but of the universe. How self-aggrandizing we humans can be!

If we only admit that our knowledge is close to zero and that Allah’s (ﷻ) knowledge is better than perfect then it is only a small step away from acknowledging His authority, dominance, and rule. In this sense of things, some people use science, or the insignificant amount of it they possess, to take issue with Allah’s authority, power, and control. All the information they need is right here. All

they have to do is to get rid of their egos and listen to what is being said to them by their Creator before it is too late. This Qur'an and the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) constitute an open invitation for all humanity to find and honor the truth.

Science should never be an excuse or self-justification for turning against Allah (ﷻ) who provided man with the mind to understand life, with the information and science that explain life, and with the utility of all this to have a better life, provided he places all this within the framework of scripture and in harmony with the life-model of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Musings of the Muddled Non-Scriptural Mind on the *Ghayb*

The *ghayb*, an integral part of a Muslim's thoughts and feelings about life, existence, and being, is not just a traditional branch of philosophy that deals at the most general level with the nature of existence — what it is, what sorts of things happen to be, of what categories, and in what structure. The term metaphysics in the non-Muslim mind is popularly used to refer to the suprasensible, beyond the realm of experience. The origin of the word *metaphysics* can be traced to the text Aristotle wrote “after the Physics.” But the word *ghayb* is essential and inseparable from the scriptural and divine definition of living and existing. Metaphysics in the Western mind is a branch of philosophy that deals with first principles — in particular, “being” (ontology) and “knowing” (epistemology) — and that is concerned with the ultimate nature of reality. It has been maintained by the same non-scriptural mind that no certain knowledge of metaphysical questions is possible.

Epistemology, or the study of how to distinguish justified belief from opinion, lies at the threshold of the subject. Metaphysics is concerned with the nature and origin of existence and of mind, the interaction between them, the meaning of time and space, causation, determinism and free will, personality and the self, arguments for belief in God, and human immortality. The foundations in Western thought of metaphysics were laid by Plato and Aristotle. St. Thomas Aquinas, basing himself on Aristotle, produced a meta-

physical structure that is accepted by the Catholic Church. The subject has been advanced by Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Marx; and in the 20th century by Bergson, Bradley, Croce, McTaggart, Whitehead, and Wittgenstein.³⁸¹

The Islamic and Qur'anic word *ghayb* is more than the “abstract” that falls within the Western philosophical discourse on metaphysics. The *ghayb* represents much more than the esoteric component of the broad term metaphysics. Similarly, it cannot be limited to the immaterial alone; and it is also more ample than the intangible. Although the *ghayb* is inclusive of the supernatural and unearthly it cannot be limited to such understanding.

The trend of thought in the non-scriptural West has developed a peculiar (mis)understanding of the “unknown” along a line of historical progression from magic to religion to science. Magic, science, and religion in this thought process amount to categories used to depict different types of worldviews or developmental stages in the history of culture. Broadly speaking, the debate over the use of these categories comes down to the extent to which the terms should properly be distinguished from one another, and the basis for making such distinctions.³⁸²

In this history of anthropology and comparative religion, the non-scriptural mind has defined three different understandings of these terms. The first views magic, religion, and science as different evolutionary stages in a single developmental progression. Within this approach, each term refers to a stage of cultural development. Magic describes the worldview of so-called primitive or technologically underdeveloped societies. Among such peoples, magic is employed as a technique to explain and control the world in the absence of better methods for doing so. This stage gives way to a more sophisticated worldview, that of religion, wherein human beings have a more realistic view of their abilities to control the natural world, and the automatic workings of magic spells give way to the worship of and dependence upon powerful superhuman entities (gods and goddesses). Finally, the third and most highly evolved stage, according to this view, is modern science, demon-

strably more successful than magic or religion as an explanatory mechanism and means of controlling nature that then supersedes the magical and religious worldviews.³⁸³

This evolutionary theory of human culture enjoyed wide currency in the 19th and early-20th centuries, particularly within the ethnographies of Edward Burnett Tylor and James Frazer and the social psychology of Sigmund Freud. It has since fallen into general disuse, however, in the face of criticism that it is prejudicial and teleological (the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by postulated causes), fails to account for the complexity and diversity of culture, and drastically simplifies the variety of processes that make up historical development.³⁸⁴

The second approach takes magic and science together and separates religion out as something intrinsically different. This approach begins from the premise that a kind of science is to be found in all cultures, though sometimes in quite rudimentary form. Both magic and science share the assumption of “laws of nature” and of causality; both attempt to operate on the world through the exploitation and manipulation of these laws. Therefore, magic is regarded as fundamentally similar to modern science, though it is based on a different belief system, identifies different laws of nature, and understands causality differently. Religion is, by contrast, relatively unconcerned with natural laws of cause and effect; rather, it is characterized by its moral and social concerns or is focused on ultimate meaning and therefore seeks to answer questions that science does not attempt to ask.³⁸⁵

The third approach, finally, asserts that there is no necessary or real difference between the terms *magic* and *religion*, and often the proponents of this approach use the term *magico-religious* to signal this fundamental unity. This approach frequently asserts that the distinctions between magic and religion are often imposed by the outside observer: those operations he feels to be truly religious are identified as such, but those things that seem fundamentally alien to his own value system are labeled as magical. Science, on the other hand, can be regarded as an empirically based technique; its findings are accepted as truth only when they can be replicated

by others. Still, within science, the way in which findings are interpreted can change dramatically, that is, shifts in the paradigm, to use the language of Thomas Kuhn (a philosophy of science scholar), do occur. Also, for most non-scientists living in scientifically oriented cultures, science functions much like religion and magic do in other cultures — as a belief system or worldview whose claims are taken more or less on faith. Thus, within this approach, magic, science, and religion are all somewhat imprecise terms that refer to more or less different ways of viewing the world and operating in accordance with the rules that are believed to govern it.³⁸⁶

The non-scriptural, secular mind will always have difficulty with the concept of the *ghayb* because the mind itself has no laboratory access to this area of reality. Besides that, the scriptural mind — the only scriptural mind left is the one that is ingrained in the Qur'an — will never suffer due to its insufficient knowledge of the unknown simply because it is confident of the amount of knowledge available to it from Allah (ﷻ), who knows all about the “unknown”; and because that information is more than humanly accurate given that it comes directly from Allah Himself. The word *ghayb* is a reference to things and matters that are absent or removed from the material or human world. And the only one who possesses full knowledge in this area is Allah, the Most Knowledgeable, who does not have human limitations or earthly restraints. His knowledge of everything, unlike we humans, is real-time knowledge. Thus when He says, **“He knows what is on earth and [in the] sea...”** He means He knows every single detail of these vast areas from their beginning to their end and in every moment of life in between. His is real-time knowledge. Just by looking at the land mass of planet Earth or the oceans and bodies of water therein, it becomes immediately obvious that man's knowledge is delayed, staggered, and observational. When Allah says that **“...no leaf falls [from a tree to the ground] except that He is aware of it [and has knowledge thereof],”** He means His knowledge of such occurrences is immediate, thorough, and in real time, unlike we humans who may observe an incident, and observe it from an angle, and observe it within a frame of lapsed time.

“There is no drop [falling] within the darkness of earth, moisture [developing] and no dehydration [in progress] except that it is [registered] in a plain record” (6:59). Allah (ﷻ) has knowledge of all details, isolated facts, and specifics wherever and whenever they occur. He is aware, as per this *āyah*, of every drop, droplet, dribble, or drip anywhere and at anytime it may occur.

The absence of the fact of the *ghayb* from intellectual activity and scientific pursuits has given the current secular world *materialism*, which is the view that everything, or everything in a certain sphere, is made of matter. For materialists, therefore, only matter exists, and mind, spirit, etc. are either illusory (eliminative materialism) or, according to a more prevalent view, can be somehow reduced to matter (reductive materialism). A non-reductive and non-eliminative materialism may also be based on supervenience.³⁸⁷

The “identity theory of mind” is often called simply materialism, and along with *physicalism*, the term may apply to any theory saying that the mental is nothing over and above the physical (materialists may or may not also deny the independent reality of abstract things like universals). In philosophy, focusing on an uncommon sense of the word, materialism suggests that the mind and associated notions are real enough but causally dependent on matter: a weak version would say that if there had been no matter there would be no mind; a stronger version would add that if matter were destroyed, the mind would vanish as well. Also uncommon in philosophical discourse is the idea of *materialist* in the sense of “emphasizing material values (food and drink, etc.)” *Dialectical materialism*, however, which applies Hegel’s dialectical process to a material rather than spiritual reality, does emphasize material values in that it makes economic considerations both the cause and the proper end of human, and especially social, action.³⁸⁸

Reductionism, also called *reductivism*, is another mental exercise by the mind to circumvent the facts that are associated with the concept of the *ghayb*. Reductionism in the scripture-starved mind is the tendency to reduce certain notions, whether everyday ones, like physical objects, or theoretical ones in science, like electrons, to allegedly simpler or more basic notions, or more empirically accessible

ones: for example, one might claim to dispense with the word *electron* and talk only of vapor trails in cloud chambers. To reduce a theory or a science to another is to show that the latter can in principle yield all the results of the former, hence the argument that everything in psychology could in principle be learned from physiology. Reductionism is a feature especially of phenomenologists and other empiricists, and of positivists in the philosophy of science.³⁸⁹

But reductionism can also, and in recent discussions usually must, be distinguished from elimination. Therefore, the assertion that “water is H₂O” reduces water to H₂O but does not say there is no water, while the claim that “demons are (really) viruses” does say there are no demons. The reductive approach provides a straight definition of water, whereas demons are not, or not straightforwardly, defined in terms of viruses. Rather the phenomena once attributed to demons are now thought to be caused by viruses. Similarly “materialism” may take a reductive or an eliminative attitude to mental phenomena. A third outlook, however, appeals to supervenience, as mentioned above. To sum up, a jinn might be *reduced* to an illusion by saying that though a jinn is real, it is in fact an illusion — that there is only one thing there, which is both a jinn and an illusion, with the illusion having explanatory priority. Or a jinn might be *eliminated* altogether so that there is only illusion. Or finally, a jinn could be real and distinct from illusion, but *supervenies* it.³⁹⁰

The committed Muslims who are the students of this Qur'an are cognizant of how utterly lost those who have no mental connection with scripture have become. The human mind is a powerful instrument, and it can go off course when it has not been given any general direction. When this human mind is not seeded with the necessary and certain information about the *ghayb*, it comes up with concepts like *phenomenalism* — literally, a theory based on appearances. Earlier phenomenologists analyzed physical objects in terms of actual and possible sensations (John Stuart Mill treated matter as a permanent possibility of sensation). More recently, phenomenism has taken a linguistic form. Its main claim has been that sentences about physical objects can be analyzed

without residue into sentences about sense data, which George Edward Moore and Bertrand Russell distinguished from sensations. Its point, in both versions, is that we can only know appearances, but need not postulate unknowable objects lurking behind them, because belief or talk about such objects is really only a disguised form of belief or talk about the appearances themselves. The phenomenalist goal of providing detailed translations of statements about physical objects, vigorously pursued until just after WWII, is now widely regarded as unattainable, even in principle.³⁹¹

Like *subjective idealism*, from which perhaps it developed, phenomenism makes appearances central. Subjective idealism says physical objects are unreal. Phenomenism says they are real, but are not what they seem: they are appearances, actual or possible. In this regard George Berkeley's views are hard to classify. Though usually called a subjective idealist, he held that physical objects were real but were ideas and not material objects. Primarily phenomenism is a doctrine about physical objects. More broadly, any view can be called phenomenist that uses "logical constructions."³⁹²

All of these "mental" exercises lead back to the non-scriptural intellectual pool of speculations and theories about the "less-than-verifiable" world of things out there, that is, how they appraise their own term, *metaphysics*. The prefix *meta-* derives from the title given to Aristotle's untitled treatise by his first-century BCE editor Andronicus. It means that which comes after "physics," the latter being the study of nature in general. Thus the questions of metaphysics arise out of, but go beyond, factual or scientific questions about the world.

A central feature of metaphysics is *ontology*, the study of "being," and in particular nowadays, what there is, such as for example, material objects, minds, persons, universals, numbers, facts, etc. There is the question of whether all these "are" in the same sense and to the same degree, and how notions like "being," existence, and subsistence are related. One can also ask whether particular views on logic commit one to particular views on what exists (for instance, propositions and numbers). A particular theory about what exists, or a list of existents, can be called an ontology.

Another question involving logic is whether or not existence is a predicate or property. Ontology borders on philosophy or religion with questions like,

- Does anything exist necessarily?
- Is it necessary that something, no matter what, should exist?
- Can any answer be given to the question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?”?

Ontology is also a technical name for part of the system of Stanislaw Lesniewski (1886–1939), the originator of an unorthodox system of the foundations of mathematics.³⁹³

Metaphysics is distinguished by the generality of its questions. As well as seeking an inventory of the kinds of things that exist, it asks what can be said about anything that exists, just in so far as it exists. Can all that exists be classified, or in some sense is, or has “being” already been divided into different fundamental kinds, in one or more ways? Is there any hierarchy among kinds of things? Do some depend on others for their existence or being? These questions involve the relations between very general notions like thing, entity, object, individual, universal, particular, substance, and also event, process, and state. Here three metaphysical outlooks, overlapping though not exhaustive, may be distinguished. One outlook (adopted by Plato, the rationalists, and others) takes one or more substances as the basis of the universe; the second takes act and potency (in the view of St. Thomas Aquinas); while the third, called *process philosophy*, takes events and processes (according to Heraclitus, the Stoics, Hegel, Bergson, and Whitehead). These outlooks, especially the first and third, are connected with attitudes toward change. Adherents of the first outlook have often held either that change is not fully real, or that the most basic things in the universe do not change except in secondary or unimportant ways. The third outlook puts change at the heart of things. It does not deny all unity and constancy, which would result in unintelligible chaos, but makes these depend essentially upon change.³⁹⁴

The distinction of act from potency, or actuality from potentiality, derives from Aristotle, as does that of form from matter and

privation, that is, the absence of form where it could be present. Both these distinctions, it is claimed, are needed to examine the nature and kinds of change, and they lead to the examination of matter itself and its relations to space and substance. Space and time in fact provide a whole range of problems about their reality, nature, absoluteness, and uniqueness. Change is also closely related to identity and causation, both of which also raise special problems in philosophy of mind, concerning personal identity, choice, and free will.³⁹⁵

These notions of change, identity, and causation lead to further questions about the general pattern of change in the universe. Is it, in the long run, random or does it lead in a certain direction? Is it cyclic or repetitive, a view more common among the Greeks than today though revived in some views in modern cosmology? Is there even, as was believed by some Pythagoreans and Stoics, who were endorsed by Nietzsche, an external recurrence of the same cycle, an endless repetition of exactly the same world history? Here, a distinction must be made between repetitions of the same participants, including ourselves, and repetitions of the same pattern with different participants, our “doubles” so to speak. The same problems arise over “mirror universes.”³⁹⁶

Questions about space and time suggest further questions about infinity. Is the universe finite or infinite? Here, as in the last paragraph, philosophy and science may overlap. And which is “higher” or more real, the finite or the infinite? There is a contrast here between Christianity, which emphasized the limitations of finite things, and the Greeks, especially the Pythagoreans and Aristotle, who regarded the infinite as essentially incomplete. Aristotle believed that there could not be an actual infinite, and that the infinite is only potential, so for example, to say that numbers are infinite may be to say merely that numbers can be added to those already considered. All of these inquiries about the overall nature of the universe lead to the question of whether a necessary being, or God, must be postulated to explain the universe. What sort of explanations can be given? In particular, are teleological explanations needed, or possible?³⁹⁷

A further general question arises in this mindset about the universe: should the universe in some relevant sense be regarded as one (monism) or many (pluralism). Since monists must presumably admit that plurality is at least apparent, the real-apparent distinction becomes relevant, and with it questions about how far skepticism with regard to the reality of things can be consistently taken: how different can the world be from what it seems, and how far can things be known as they are? Another view that relies heavily on the real-apparent contrast, because it differs widely from common sense, is *idealism*, which regards reality as basically mental or dependent on the mind. But idealism is not necessarily skeptical.³⁹⁸

An influential source of skepticism earlier in the 20th century, however, has been interest in the influence of language. Some have thought, especially logical positivists like Rudolf Carnap, that the distinction between substance and attribute is simply a reflection of the grammatical distinction between noun and adjective (without asking how that arose), so that instead of talking of things and qualities we should talk of thing-words and quality-words. We will then see, it is claimed, that we need not regard beauty as a metaphysical entity simply because we have the thing-word *beauty*. How far does “ontology recapitulate philology”? Philosophers like the logical positivist, who emphasized language, often reacted against speculative metaphysics (the construction of all-embracing systems that cannot be tested by observation). Many empiricists, notably David Hume, do so too, though the mantle of empiricism has at least partly fallen on anti-realism. Descriptive metaphysics claims to avoid the vices of speculative metaphysics, without abandoning metaphysics altogether. It confines itself to analyzing various concepts, like substance, which it claims to show are basic and unavoidable.³⁹⁹

Metaphysics also borders on ethics and aesthetics (the branch of philosophy dealing with beauty or taste). It asks whether values are grounded in the nature of things, or contribute to the cosmic process, and what kind of reality is possessed by works of art and the things that make them (for example, the figures in a painting).⁴⁰⁰

Taken as the name of a subject, *metaphysics* is no longer a “bad word,” but the current mood, though far less restrictive than logical

positivism, or linguistic philosophy, remains predominantly hostile to anti-common-sense speculations, including idealist or skeptical systems (though idealism has some following here and there). At the same time it regards most forms of dualism (the doctrine that reality consists of two basic elements, usually mind and matter) as over-simplifying at best. The return of metaphysics is marked by a greater tolerance of large-scale systems, and also of such things as essentialism and substantive (not merely logical) necessity.⁴⁰¹

There can only be pity for those intellectual classes of the world who spent their lifetimes theorizing and their centuries thinking without referring to the guidance from Allah (ﷻ). Searching for certainty in a domain of doubt, they ended up apothosizing (elevating to the rank of a god) the uncertain knowledge of man while making incredulous the certain knowledge of God, scripture, and prophet. For that which is removed from or beyond limited human senses, stumbling human experiences, and inadequate human minds, this impeccable Book provides positive information concerning facts, reality, and existence that not only satisfies human curiosity, but also answers those questions that run circles around philosophers.

Sleep: a Daily Experience with the *Ghayb*

Allah's (ﷻ) real-time and exhaustive knowledge of the *ghayb*, inclusive of what happens every moment in life everywhere in existence, is categorical. One of the many aspects of this *ghayb* concerns what is happening inside every human being, individually as well as collectively. And so the Qur'anic text moves the reader into this area of our own internal selves and Allah's leverage therein,

And He it is who causes you to be inanimate at night, and knows what you buffet during the day; and He re-animates you each day in order that a term set [by Him] be fulfilled. In the end, unto Him you must return: and then He will make you understand all that you were doing [in life] (6:60).

Sometimes, the monotony of, and at other times, the routine of life tend to conceal the fact that it is Allah (ﷻ) who puts us to sleep every night. This is part of the *ghayb* that the narrow human mind cannot detect, and therefore, cannot observe; and therefore cannot analyze; and therefore, cannot explain; and therefore, cannot understand without the information from within the *ghayb* itself that is provided by Allah Himself.

“And He it is who causes you to expire [every] night [into slumber.” Once drowsiness takes its course, sleep ensues. Man’s consciousness is suspended and the senses are afloat. The somatic contact with sensory stimuli is temporarily shut down. The mind is quiescent. The details of this “falling asleep” cannot be satisfactorily explained. There is an information deficit about how sleep “sets in.” Researchers can speak about it intelligently to some extent, but only as far as human experience, discovery, and science will take them.

The contemporary “enlightened” understanding of sleep has been attended by the compilation of a considerable amount of information. Sleep is necessary for survival and good health, but why sleep is needed and exactly how it benefits people are not fully understood. Individual requirements for sleep vary widely; healthy adults may need as few as four hours or as many as ten hours of sleep every day. Most people sleep at night. However, many people must sleep during the day to accommodate work schedules, a situation that often leads to sleep disorders.⁴⁰²

How long a person sleeps and how rested a person feels after waking can be influenced by many factors, including level of excitement or emotional distress, age, diet, and use of drugs. For example, some drugs make a person sleepy, and others make sleeping difficult. Some food components or additives, such as caffeine, strong spices, and monosodium glutamate (MSG), may affect sleep. Older people tend to fall asleep earlier, to awaken earlier, and to be less tolerant of changes in sleep patterns (for example, they may be more prone to jet lag). Compared with younger adults and children, older people are more easily aroused from sleep and awaken more often during the night. Whether older people need less sleep is un-

clear. Napping during the day may help compensate for poor sleep during the night, but it may also contribute to the problem.⁴⁰³

All sleep is not the same. There are two main types: rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and non-rapid eye movement (non-REM) sleep, which has four stages. People normally cycle through the four stages of non-REM sleep, usually followed by a brief interval of REM sleep, five or six times every night. Sleep progresses from stage 1 (the lightest level, during which the sleeper can be awakened easily) to stage 4 (the deepest level, during which the sleeper can be awakened only with difficulty). In stage 4, blood pressure is at its lowest, and heart and breathing rates are at their slowest.⁴⁰⁴

During REM sleep, electrical activity in the brain is unusually high, somewhat resembling that during wakefulness. The eyes move rapidly, and muscles may jerk involuntarily. The rate and depth of breathing increase, but the muscles, except for the diaphragm, are greatly relaxed — more so than during the deepest levels of non-REM sleep. Most dreaming occurs during REM sleep. Most talking during sleep, night terrors, and sleepwalking occur during stages 3 and 4 of non-REM sleep.⁴⁰⁵

Usually, sleep disorders can be diagnosed based on medical history, including a description of the current problem, and the results of a physical examination. When the diagnosis is uncertain, doctors may recommend evaluation in a sleep laboratory. The evaluation consists of polysomnography and observation of unusual movements during an entire night's sleep. Polysomnography includes the recording and monitoring of breathing, heart rate, and other functions; electroencephalography (EEG), which records the brain's electrical activity; and electro-oculography, which records eye movement during REM sleep.⁴⁰⁶ This overview of human observations about sleep cannot dispute the fact that Allah (ﷻ) causes a daily bio-expiration that exhibits as sleep. This fact needs to be worked into the conscience of committed Muslims, to begin with, and then that of the rest of humanity.

“And [He] knows what you ward off during daytime...” Each body movement and every gesture of man is noted in the real-time knowledge of Allah. **“And then He reanimates you each day**

in order that a term set [by Him] be fulfilled.” Human beings physically deplete themselves during the day and then require a respite of recharging during the night. This cycle is indispensable to human life on earth. The attention-worthy aspect here concerns acknowledging that it is Allah (ﷻ) who supervises this daily “bio-conscious” and “bio-unconscious” cycle. **“In the end, unto Him you must return...”** Going back to Him is unavoidable. Life is, in a sense, an extended day. When man exhausts his bodily energy, he goes into the final sleep, which is referred to as *death*.

“And then He will make you understand all that you were doing [in life].” If we were to contemplate the overall and inclusive elements of this lesson we would understand that there is a *ghayb* in our 24-hour day. There is a dimension of being that we cannot break down and analyze as we sleep through it. We are thankful to Allah (ﷻ) for providing us with the pertinent information about this fact in life — a fact that we repeat every day, a fact that we experience on a daily basis, yet a fact that some people are too selfish or arrogant to admit.

The more we think about it, the more we realize it is a miracle, and the more we subsume ourselves in Allah’s power, control, and enlightenment. Unfortunate indeed are those who are blinded by a small amount of information and by a few discoveries and observations that lead them to deny the Creator and Knower of all — Allah (ﷻ) — and the truth He revealed.

The Moment of Death Reveals Who Is in Command

The following *āyāt* call man back to the utmost overwhelmingness of Allah (ﷻ). All other temporal assumptions of power pale in comparison to the exquisite power of Allah — and this is what ought to figure most prominently in man’s thinking and planning. Never should he omit the fact of Allah’s working power in social developments, not to mention His monitoring precision. The flow of time and the direction of history are in Allah’s control. And then man’s ultimate destiny, his death and dying, is of overriding importance in all that he wishes to reach to fruition,

And He alone holds power over His subjects. And He sends forth heavenly forces to watch over you until, when death approaches any of you, Our Messengers cause his earthly life to come to an end: and they do not overlook [anyone]. And they are thereupon brought back to Allah, their true Lord Supreme. Oh verily, His alone is all judgement. And He is the swiftest of all reckoners! (6:61–62).

Until the very recent past, the subject of power had been excluded from “mainstream” Islamic discourse for at least a few centuries, if not longer. And even today, with all the fire and brimstone descending on Muslims for their lack of temporal power, Muslim preachers and teachers, like weaklings, pragmatists, and opportunists of all stripes, still avoid interweaving issues of power into their expositions on Islam. The readers and executors of this Qur’an should be reciting these *āyāt* to gain an accurate understanding of power, especially with regard to how it does not belong to executives, kings, generals, or militaries. Many individuals, and even the “educated,” have been fooled by the phony expression of imperial and maximalist power.

In social science circles, as they attempt to understand and then explain human behavior in societies, there are widespread and diverse notions concerning the conceptualization of power. In the materialistic world, starting with man as their focus (unfortunately), secular social scientists generally define power as the ability to gain what is wanted, or to produce desired change. This change may occur in physical systems, as when a hole is dug, a car is driven, or a pot is fashioned. It may refer to a change in beliefs, knowledge, or know-how; or it may signal a change in laws, institutions, organizations, boundaries, and so on. Power may be enhanced by the means or instruments of power — tools, machines, weapons, technology, communications, money (or purchasing power), the ability to persuade, etc. The power to destroy and the power to create are often allied in a single process, for instance, wheat is destroyed to make flour and flour is destroyed to make bread. Destructive power

involves cost; constructive power, benefit. Destructive power is usually justified on the grounds that the benefits exceed the costs.⁴⁰⁷

There are a great many varieties of power, each of which has a dynamic of its own, and hence no standard terminology for classifying the varieties of power exists in academia or elsewhere. Nevertheless, a number of scholars and social scientists direct attention to three major varieties. The first is frequently called “force,” which usually implies power over other people, as when a crying child is lifted up and put in a crib, or when a criminal is sent to prison and later executed, or when a city in an enemy country is bombed. There is a distinction here perhaps between force as restraint, as in the case of the child, and force as victimization, out of fear, hatred, or contempt for the victim. Force is associated strongly with threat power, which consists of the threatener saying to the threatened, “You do something I want or I’ll do something you don’t want.” This is usually associated with political structures such as governments. The dynamic that results from the threat can be very complex and depends on the reaction of the threatened and the counter-reactions of the threatener. The threatened may submit, as in paying an income tax or, in occasionally obeying a speed limit.⁴⁰⁸

A second possibility is defiance on the part of the threatened, which puts the system back in the hands of the threatener as to whether to carry out the threat. This is often expensive, and threats are frequently bluffs. A defied threat may collapse. If the threat is carried out, the threatener also tends to be injured.⁴⁰⁹

A third possibility is flight on the part of the threatened, for the power of a threatener always declines as the distance from the threatener increases because of some cost of transport. Decline in the cost of transport of threats in the form of destructive power, as demonstrated dramatically in the 20th century, can profoundly affect the institutions that rest on threat. Flight from threat probably counts for a good deal of the expansion of the human race around the globe.⁴¹⁰

A fourth possibility is counter-threat, when the threatened says to the threatener, “If you do something nasty to me, I’ll do something nasty to you.” This can lead to “arms races” and to

mutual deterrence; the latter, however, can only be stable in the short run. It must have some positive probability of breaking down or it will not deter. Living under mutual deterrence, therefore, is rather like living in a flood-plain with a positive probability each year of a flood. There is some evidence that pre-nuclear deterrence in the modern world had a probability of breaking down of about 3–5% per annum. The five wars of the United States in the 20th century illustrate this principle rather well.⁴¹¹

A fifth response to threat might be described as disarming behavior on the part of the threatened, as in for example, communications that appeal to the potential community of the threatened and the threatener. Even submission can be part of this process, as when taxes are paid and then the government that imposed them is voted out.⁴¹²

The second variety of power, surrounding the system of threat power, and sharing complex interactions with it, is a system of economic power. This can perhaps best be defined as that which the rich have more of than the poor. The measure of economic power in a society or in the world is given roughly by aggregates like the gross national product or the gross world product. This is a very imperfect measure, as it neglects household production and includes the war industry, which produces very little civil benefit. The distribution of economic power among individuals, groups, and nations is the result of a long historical process that includes a certain amount of threat power in terms of stealing other people's property, but on the whole depends mainly on the differential increases in productivity. Exploitation that rests on the use of threat power only accounts for a small proportion of the growth of riches of the already rich, which is mainly the result of a learning process such as that which has enabled the rich countries to feed themselves with a much smaller proportion of the labor force than was required say 200 years ago. There is a good deal of evidence, at least from the middle of the 19th century onward, that the imperial powers in Europe sharply reduced their own internal rate of economic development as a result of the resources expended on empires and that non-imperial countries like Denmark and Sweden got richer at a

much faster rate by devoting more of their resources to the internal learning process.⁴¹³

The third form of power goes by many names. It is the power of legitimacy, loyalty, affection, community, identity, and so on. In the long run this seems to be the dominant form of power, to which perhaps can be given the name “integrative power.” Without widespread legitimacy, neither threat power nor economic power can be very effective. In the previously communist countries, the financial markets lost their legitimacy for many decades. Without legitimacy, these markets could not have functioned. Threat without legitimacy is also quite ineffective. It is hard to get rich by mugging or by winning wars. Military defeat often leads to cultural and economic expansion, as in Paris after 1871, or in Christian Europe after the victory of the Ottomans in 1453. China seems always to have prospered after being conquered and to have had a remarkable capacity for turning its conquerors into Chinese. It is a very short-term view, therefore, that looks at threat and force as the ultimate form of power, although there are situations in which it is important, particularly when it is allied with integrative power, as in the case of the initial Islamic *futuḥāt* (liberations).⁴¹⁴

From the middle of the 19th century onward, there has been a remarkable rise in the area of non-belligerency among some independent nation-states, beginning perhaps with Scandinavia after the Danish defeat by the Germans in 1864. The absence of warfare in North America came after the virtual extermination of its original inhabitants by the 1870s. The cases of Japan, Australia, and the rest of Europe after WWII involved the abandonment of military threat as a means of changing frontiers and a reasonable restraint on the power to intervene in other people’s affairs.⁴¹⁵

One interesting twist on power in the 20th century has been the rise of the power of organized nonviolence in achieving political change, most dramatically, of course, with Gandhi in India, but also in Eastern Europe in 1989. This is a complex phenomenon, but it does appeal to the development of “positive-sum games,” a dynamic in which both parties benefit. Economic power also rests very much on the principle that exchange is a positive-

sum game, especially in competitive markets, although in monopolistic situations there may be recourse to threat and bargaining.⁴¹⁶

It is a curious irony that improvement in the means of destruction has often diminished the power of threat. It was the invention of the effective cannon that made the feudal caste and the city wall obsolete and created the nation-state, with its relatively widespread areas of internal peace. Similarly, the nuclear weapon and the long-range missile have probably done for the nation-state what gunpowder did for the feudal baron. Reliance on threat power may destroy it; the development of integrative power in the form of stable peace and a world community may save it. The more we appreciate the complexity of the concept of power, the better chance we have for survival.⁴¹⁷

Into this world power structure and conceptualization enters the Muslim with Allah's (ﷻ) definition,

And He alone holds sway/power over His subjects. And He sends forth protective forces to watch over you, until, when death approaches any of you, Our messengers cause his earthly life to come to an end: and they do not neglect [anyone]. And they are thereupon brought before Allah, their true Lord Supreme. Oh verily, His alone is all judgement. And He is the swiftest of all reckoners! (6:61–62).

Empires do arise and exert fluctuating influence here and there until they succumb. Imperial powers take shape and fight wars with all the power in their possession only to fold and become chapters in history books. “Superpowers” make their debut and leave their imprint on continents and populations with their “spheres of influence” and nation-state blocs. But then they too begin to diminish and lose all the power they once wielded. And the words of Allah (ﷻ) stand as a testament against these most powerful entities in their times, **“He alone holds power/controlling influence over His subjects...”** In the midst of their (usually immoral) exercise of power these empires and their militaries were

never internally conscious of Allah's power. In the long history of empires and conglomerate powers, little has been written about their imperial exploitation ministries of defense, ministries of foreign affairs, or ministries of justice actively debating and practically discussing Allah's power in shaping their plans and conditioning their behavior. When was the last time a foreign minister, a minister of justice, or a chief executive was heard talking about God's power in the pursuit of "new markets," "consumer populations," or "economic expansion?" Insofar as this writer is concerned, it has never happened because God to them is irrelevant, His scripture is ancient, and His presence is hypothetical.

Muslims of commitment, though, are hyper-conscious of Allah's power and glory. These *āyāt* say as much, **"And He sends forth safekeeping forces to watch over you..."** In this context this *āyah* infers that man, almost by nature, is prone to self-destruction. The wars, the behind-the-scenes plots, and the abusive attitudes the powerful harbor against the powerless are all indications of how man is inclined toward his own undoing. Thus it takes intervening forces from Allah (ﷻ) to secure the quality of our human relationships and our human coexistence.

The Qur'anic text does not specify what or who these *ḥafazah* (preventive and custodial powers) are. There are other references in the Qur'an to them being angels who are charged with keeping a close watch over what people are doing with their lives. In this context, man is informed that Allah (ﷻ) has a "monitoring" capacity over his initiatives and behavior. Therefore, no one should, for one moment, think that he is on his own. Every individual has a *ḥāfiẓ* and a *raqīb* (custodian and monitor) who keep a watchful eye on everything he does. In effect, man can do nothing in secrecy. And this applies to government security classifications for information and material (embodying information), the unauthorized disclosure of which is considered by a government to be prejudicial to the interest or prestige of such government. This also applies to any clandestine operation or activity designed to influence foreign governments, organizations, persons, or events in support of imperial or power-appropriating government. Furthermore, this *āyah* encom-

passes all operations that are planned and executed so as to conceal the identity of, or permit plausible denial by, the sponsor. They differ from clandestine operations in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the identity of the sponsor rather than on the concealment of the operation. Similarly, any operation involving covert action and clandestine collection of information on behalf of imperial and empire powers is covered under the purview of this *āyah*.

“Until, when death approaches any of you, Our emissaries cause his earthly life to come to an end: and they do not fail to attend [to anyone].” Placing this *āyah* in this context is awe inspiring. Think of the power mongers, the power-centrics, and the power hungry who spend a lifetime accumulating power, exercising power, and abusing power. Think of how oblivious they are to the fact that everything they are doing is being registered by Allah (ﷻ) and recorded in His system. Then think of these very same individuals who, as they approach the moment of death, are absolutely incapable of leveraging their temporal power to avoid that inescapable moment. This moment has always been in the *ghayb*; no one can know or foretell when it will arrive. This is the inevitability that will impel anyone to recognize who the real power on earth is. And this is also why the power elite, the power structure, and the power centers that run a society without any regard or consideration for the power of Allah try to smother this reality so as to deceive their populations into giving fealty where it does not belong.

“And they are thereupon brought before Allah, their true Lord Supreme.” This is when these previously power-intoxicated individuals and elites return to their Maker. Now they can see who the true Superior is, who the true Lord is. Now, though it is too late, they have no option but to acknowledge His power, as they realize that it was He who created them and gave them freedom in life to honor Him and His power, and to submit to His control, checks, and commands. It was the power of Allah (ﷻ) that brought them into life and it was the power of Allah that took them out of life. Their birth and their death was an act of Allah, but they chose, of their own free will, to deny Him, to diminish Him, and to disregard Him. And so, now they reach the moment of truth, unpolluted by

their earthly power, **“Verily, is not all exercise of authority His alone? And He is the swiftest of reckoners!”**

Pity man. Pity human societies that do not give Allah (ﷻ) His due. Man in his pursuit of power on earth failed to honor the authority of Allah — and he will pay a high price for this failure. Allah will not forgive this sin of sins, this crime of crimes. When man finally returns to his Creator the gravity of this crime is so serious that man will not be given a respite, will not be delayed a trial, and will not see any amnesty. Justice for denying Allah’s authority on earth will be swift.

Crimes are committed by individuals who are integrated into societies. And so, it will be these individuals who will be held accountable for dishonoring Allah’s (ﷻ) authority on earth. And how can anyone dishonor His authority when He profusely presented them with His code of social conduct, with His laws and regulations, and with His *sharī‘ah* and *ḥaqīqah*? Therefore, the standards of judgement on that Day of Judgement shall not be liberal or conservative, nor from a capitalist or communist constitution, nor influenced by man-made secular systems in any way, shape, or form.

Men on that tumultuous Day of Reckoning will be judged and evaluated by the norms and standards of Allah (ﷻ). Thus, they will be taken to task for failing to extend morality beyond self, for delinquency in promoting the social standards of scripture, and for dereliction in upholding the principles of justice that are preserved through scripture and apostle. The social breakdown and the official meltdown of their own secular and non-scriptural orders on earth will be a cardinal sin for which they will have to agonize and suffer in the life to come.

This and other scriptures of Allah (ﷻ) are a revolution against the usurpation of authority and then the usurpation of power from Allah by rulers, governments, and elites who were intoxicated with their largely irrelevant earthly power. Organized and civilized society needs authority. But which authority? Any popular designation of authority other than to Allah takes those people into the domain of *shirk* — an abhorrent, civil crime, and an act punishable by Allah’s law.

Catastrophes and Crises: Indications of Man's Trifling Power

At this point, Allah (ﷻ) arouses what they already know of their instinctive nature. Packaging a reminder inside a query, He asks them what they inevitably resort to in their moments of hopelessness, desperation, and imminent death; what they genuinely feel when they find themselves in the danger of drowning or perishing? They know intuitively that they would reflexively turn to God. Their internal voice tells them that no one is capable of rescuing them from land crises and sea predicaments except Allah. But, unfortunately, once the danger is past, most of them throw their destiny to the intervention of "fate," and then they go back to their self-established ways and traditions of denying Him His authority,

Say, "Who is it that saves you from the dark dangers of land and sea [when] you call unto Him humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts, 'If He will but save us from this [distress], we shall most certainly be among the grateful'?" Say, "Allah [alone] can save you from this and from every distress — and still you ascribe divinity/authority to other powers beside Him!" (6:63–64).

Fear and danger are moments in life when man knows he is powerless. It also happens to be the time when he knows that power belongs to Allah (ﷻ). So in these exposed moments of life when there is no confusion about who has and who does not have power, when man senses this reality, he admits the truth that establishments and systems try very hard to conceal. But even after admitting this fundamental and elementary truth of Allah's power, when man feels safe again he resumes his old habits by acquiescing to worldly powers. This authority and power shift between God and worldly forces has been the moving force in history. It has been the dividing line between scripture and Satan, and it will continue to trouble societies and civilizations until they get it straight.

To preempt human nature when it feels that it has escaped the immediate danger, thinking now that the life-threatening event is a matter of history, the *āyah* here places this fickle human nature in

the only constancy that counts: no one is able to escape Allah's power to direct and determine,

Say, "It is He alone who has the power to bring down agony upon you or to bring it about from beneath your feet, and to confound you with mutual discord and let you experience the terror of one another." Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth (6:65).

This *āyah* points out the two types of pain man suffers when he runs away from Allah (ﷻ). One is the physical pain resulting from natural disasters, and the other is the psychological pain associated with social disasters. The former could be called a catastrophe and the latter a crisis. Almost every time in history when man has agonizingly emerged out of these catastrophes and crises he tries to efface the fact that God was and is ever-present. Specifically, what kind of catastrophes and crises has man had to endure? No doubt the reader will be familiar with the list that follows in the ensuing paragraphs, but the focus here should be less on the intricate details than on what can be learned from human nature and behavior as they navigate the necessity of keeping with God through catastrophes and after crises.

Earthquakes are one of those terrifying human disasters that bring the hope and fear of Allah (ﷻ) into man's life. An earthquake is a series of shock waves generated at a focal point within the Earth, and caused by the movement of rocks on a fault plane releasing stored strain energy. The point on the surface of the Earth above the focus is the epicenter. Major earthquakes are associated with the edges of tectonic plates that make up the Earth's crust, and along mid-oceanic ridges where new crust is forming. The greatest concentration of earthquakes is in a belt around the Pacific Ocean (the "ring of fire"), and along a zone from the Mediterranean East to the Himalayas and China. The magnitude of an earthquake is measured on the Richter scale. Major earthquakes, such as in San Francisco in 1906 and Japan in 1923, can cause

much damage to property and loss of life.⁴¹⁸ An earthquake falls within the purview of the *āyah*, **“It is He alone who has the power to let loose upon you suffering... from beneath your feet.”**

Another form of natural catastrophe is an avalanche (from the French word *aval* meaning *to swallow*), the fall of a mass of snow and ice down a steep slope. Avalanches occur because of the unstable nature of snow masses in mountain areas. Changes of temperature, sudden sound, or earth-borne vibrations may trigger an avalanche, particularly on slopes of more than 35 degrees. The snow compacts into ice as it moves, and rocks may be carried along, adding to the damage caused. And how many communities recover from such a tragedy with God more central to their lives?⁴¹⁹

Some human societies experience the mortal danger of a tsunami, the long-period ocean waves produced by movements of the sea floor associated with earthquakes, volcanic explosions, or landslides. Tsunamis may cross entire ocean basins at speeds as great as 800 km/hr (500 miles/hr), and strike coastal regions with devastating force. Thousands of lives have been lost in regions of the Pacific subject to destructive tsunamis, which may reach heights in excess of 30 m (100 ft). They are also referred to as seismic sea waves, and in popular culture (but not technical oceanographic parlance) as tidal waves. And here, too, after such human disasters how many societies emerge from this peril more attached to Allah (ﷻ)?⁴²⁰

Another dreaded catastrophe that shakes affected human societies is the volcano, a vent or fissure in the Earth’s crust where molten lava is erupted onto the surface. The shape of a volcano depends on the composition of the lava: lower-temperature, viscous, silica-rich lava forms steep-sided cones inter-bedded with ash, such as Mt. Fuji, Japan; less viscous, silica-poor, basaltic lavas form gentle slopes, as found in Iceland. Most volcanoes are confined to the zones along boundaries between crust plates, and are closely associated with earthquakes, as in the circum-Pacific “ring of fire”; but there are notable exceptions, such as the Hawaiian Islands, which have formed on a “hot spot” in the Earth’s crust. The scientific study of volcanoes is known as vulcanology. And with the his-

tory of ancient and modern volcanoes, how many societies come to their senses and honor God, who alone is capable of rescuing humanity from these types of natural disasters?⁴²¹

Life-threatening famines also imperil the human condition. Famine is a period of food scarcity that may lead to malnutrition and death through starvation. The causes of famines are complex; they may result from natural causes, such as failure of a harvest following lack of rainfall and drought, or from combinations of political and economic circumstances such as war. Famine may also occur in a region where food is not completely scarce, but is unavailable to a sector of the population. This was the case in the Welo province famine of Ethiopia (1972–1974), where food was available in the markets but at unaffordable prices for the local people.⁴²²

Drought also falls under the purview of this *āyah*. Drought is an extended period of dry weather, generally associated with a blocking anticyclone in which evapotranspiration exceeds precipitation, causing soil moisture deficits. Some regions, especially arid and semi-arid areas, are particularly prone to droughts, which can result in food shortages and human suffering. In the Sahel region on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, rainfall in 1968–1972 was only 50% of the 1931–1960 average, and was accompanied by major famine. Other areas prone to drought include the west and midwest of the USA, parts of Australia and South Africa, but it can occur in any place where there is a low rainfall, including Britain.⁴²³ Drought and famine are two of the visitations and tribulations humanity would rather forget about as soon as it recovers from the limited damage and then goes on denying Allah (ﷻ) His ability to comfort and secure them — even as life-threatening as they were at the time they occurred,

Say, “It is He alone who has the power to let loose upon you suffering from above you or from beneath your feet, or to confound you with mutual discord and let you undergo the fear of one another.” Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth (6:65).

Throughout time society has been afflicted by mortal dangers such as the plague, the most notorious epidemic disease of all time, caused by infection with *Yersinia* (formerly *Pasteurella*) *pestis*, carried by fleas that infest rodents and squirrels, which then bite humans. The symptoms are those of a severe infection with the development of *buboes*, that is, swollen, acutely inflamed lymph nodes; hence the name bubonic plague. A pneumonic form that spreads rapidly between people occurs in an epidemic. Outbreaks of plague (black death) afflicted communities over many centuries, and in the middle of the 14th century, wave after wave of the disease killed half the population of Europe. Today, it occurs only in isolated cases or as small local outbreaks.⁴²⁴

From 1918–1920 there was a worldwide influenza strain that killed an estimated 21,500,000 people throughout the world. In the course of one year, between 1918 and 1919, this new strain of influenza swept the globe. The pandemic afflicted more than half the total human population, killing more victims than all the guns of WWI, which ended as the disease reached its climax. There was little hint of future carnage in the first, mainly mild, epidemics that almost simultaneously struck China, North America, and Spain. Where the disease originated has never been determined. From February 1918, thousands of Spaniards began taking to their beds, suffering from high temperatures and aching bodies. Three days after falling sick most were up again. As an epidemic it seemed quite mild contrasted with the severe “Russian” influenza of 1889–1890. By early summer mild influenza had reached most corners of the world.⁴²⁵

Then, in early-September, a second, far more deadly outbreak started. It was a new strain of influenza virus originating possibly in Africa or Russia. Like the earlier mild outbreak, the fatal virus spread around the world much faster than the pandemic of the past. Trains and steamships — products of industrial progress — were ironically the vehicles that helped to spread the virus. It took only a few hours for trains to spread the disease from the northern British trans-Atlantic ports of Liverpool and Glasgow to London in southern England. A few days were enough for a trainload of

infected troops to carry the virus across the breadth of Canada. Transoceanic voyages admittedly took longer. The SS Niagara spent three weeks transporting influenza from western Canada to New Zealand; its arrival in mid-October foredoomed almost 6,700 citizens to death.⁴²⁶

The second influenza wave died down as 1918 closed. But early in 1919 a third and final wave occurred. Although less severe than the second wave, it nonetheless killed countless thousands of people. Because of the speed with which influenza spread no one could determine its point of origin. Different nations were blamed for starting it. In Western Europe, Spain became the major scapegoat. The Russians blamed nomads from Turkestan in Central Asia. The Germans believed the virus came from Chinese troops serving with their British counterparts in France. An American officer claimed that German submarines had let loose influenza on North America as a secret weapon.⁴²⁷

What no country disagreed about was the grim effects of the pandemic that had gripped the world by late-autumn in 1918. Many cases came on with sudden violence. At embarkation camps in North America, troops collapsed in droves. In Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) a man waiting for a street car casually inquired about its destination and dropped dead. An off-duty Cape Town (South Africa) streetcar driver reported six deaths among the passengers and crew in one three-mile journey.⁴²⁸

Pneumonia was one of the complications of the disease and struck one in five afflicted individuals, often with no warning. The lips, face, and sometimes the whole body of some victims took on an unnatural purplish-blue tinge, revealing a massive viral attack upon the lungs that starved blood and body of the oxygen they needed. One New York doctor grimly described patients newly admitted to his hospital as “blue as huckleberries and spitting blood.” Many sufferers gasped for air at twice their normal respiration rate, and adults’ pulses raced like those of healthy infants. Purple blisters on back, chest, and limbs were other ugly signs. Most of the discolored patients felt no great discomfort. But doctors quickly discovered that blue lips and face were usually followed by death within two days.⁴²⁹

In normal influenza epidemics the old are always vulnerable, but Spanish influenza seemed to strike most harshly at the fit and young. Half of those who died were in the 20- to 40-year-old age group. Soldiers were one of the groups worst hit. From as early as the first spring wave, Italian troops began to choke to death, lungs clogged by mucus, blood, and foam. By early-October influenza had immobilized 16,000 US troops entrenched in the Argonne Forest area of France. Meanwhile, back home in North America, pneumonia was killing up to one in five soldiers awaiting embarkation. As one doctor claimed, it had become more dangerous to be a soldier in the peaceful United States than to have been on the firing line in France. In southern England, 1,000 of a group of 3,000 German prisoners of war succumbed.⁴³⁰

The world over, influenza crippled social and economic life as WWI had never done. By the second week in October, Montreal had shut all schools, cinemas, dance halls, and theaters to try to halt the spread of influenza. In other nations, a number of cities took similar action. Vital tasks were interrupted. As farm laborers sickened and died, neglect affected crops around the world. In northern India, countless fields of grain remained unharvested. In Poland potatoes rotted in the ground. Similarly, there were few people fit enough to harvest the coffee, rubber, and other cash crops of the tropics. Industry and business lost momentum. Staff shortages forced a temporary closure of banks in Brazil and New Zealand. Major copper mines in the Belgian Congo and Peru stopped operating. Trade and travel faltered. Trains no longer ran between Germany and Sweden, or between Spain and Portugal. Some ports lay idle. Even organized government began to crumble. New Zealand's parliament temporarily shut down for lack of members.⁴³¹

Many places tried a variety of futile efforts to halt the spread of the infection. Policemen patrolled in gangster-like masks, against the risk of breathing germs. In Dublin, water carts swilled disinfectant through the gutters. In New Zealand a teacher used a shovel of hot embers and formalin to fumigate her school. At Bilbao in northern Spain, officials forced people to breathe fumes from burning sulfur. Superstition in some places flourished widely.

The Japanese tried fooling the disease demons by pinning up notices declaring that no one was at home. Traders in voodoo charms did brisk business in New Orleans. Some bids to ward off influenza were actually dangerous. The world over, terrified people shut doors and windows and blocked drafty chinks (gaps) to shut out the agents of disease. Deprived of oxygen, scores of households suffocated in Jamaica alone.⁴³²

There were countless stories told of individual tragedies. Rich and poor, famous and obscure, no one escaped the terrible disease. But individual deaths were merely drops in the swelling ocean of mortality. In Australia one woman counted 26 funerals passing in a mere three hours. By October 1918, 700 people were dying of the disease every day in Bombay. By December, death was daily diminishing Barcelona's population by 1,200. By the time the third flu wave subsided some estimates put the worldwide toll at over 231,500,000. Probably three-fourths of all deaths occurred in Asia, with Europe the next worst affected continent, then North America, and Africa. Mercifully, by 1920 the supply of fresh victims was exhausted and the lethal strain of influenza vanished (although it is known that pigs carry the influenza virus). It was many years before scientists learned to isolate an influenza virus and produce a vaccine to protect a population from certain influenza attacks.⁴³³

From catastrophes to crises, man in his self-imposed exile away from God incurs his own mortal dangers. During the last century, especially from the Euro-American context, as this is what appears to be "advanced" and "progressive" in the eyes of many, there has been little respite from the manufactured crises the people have had to put up with.

In 1914, Germans could buy a dozen eggs for one mark. By the Summer of 1923 a single egg cost 5,000 marks. In November 1923 the price of one egg had reached 80,000,000,000 marks. To cope with such astronomical prices the printing presses of the Reichsbank poured out mountains of paper money. Some 30 paper mills were engaged full time in making the paper, and 132 private printing firms had been brought in to help the national bank turn out the

wagon loads of money that would become valueless within a matter of days, sometimes in a matter of hours.⁴³⁴

Before WWI the highest denomination banknote had been the 1,000-mark note, equivalent to 250 dollars. The mark began its downward slide in 1922 and the first 10,000-mark notes were then issued. These were soon insufficient except for tiny purchases — a single matchstick was eventually to cost 900 million marks — and the Reichsbank added more and more zeros to the figures shown on the notes. After the 200,000-mark note came the 500,000 and the 1-million-mark note. This was followed by notes for 10, 100, and 500 million; then by notes for 1,000 million, 10,000 million, 100,000 million. Often these were produced by stamping a higher value on notes of lower denomination that had become worthless by the time they were printed. Finally, 1-million-million-mark notes were issued, the largest being for 100 million million marks or 100,000,000,000,000 — sufficient to buy 1,200 eggs.⁴³⁵

Inflation of this sort was unparalleled and the speed with which the mark sank brought a terrifying insecurity. A man going into a cafe with 5,000 marks for a cup of coffee would call for his bill an hour later and find the price had gone up to 8,000. Prices of durable goods went up daily, sometimes several times a day. Objects in shop windows were given a basic figure, which remained fixed for that object at say 18 or 20 or whatever it might be. In the middle of the window was the multiplier, a number by which the basic figure had to be multiplied to arrive at the current price. The multiplier might be 25,000,000 one morning, but if a buyer delayed too long in getting the money from the bank he might find that it had gone up as high as 50,000,000 by the afternoon.⁴³⁶

How had this insane state of affairs come about? The cost of the war and the problems of post-war recovery had imposed severe strains on the German economy. Reparations were a crippling burden and any hope of meeting them became impossible after the French and Belgians occupied the industrial Ruhr (metropolitan area in Germany) in January 1923. Unemployment was low but foreign currency soon became expensive. Prices that had been mounting steadily since the end of the war began to go up fast. The

government increased the circulation of notes and soon too much money was chasing too few goods. Prices shot up faster, the exchange rate of the mark dropped rapidly, yet more notes were issued and the vicious spiral of inflation was well under way.⁴³⁷

The harsh effects of inflation were distributed unequally, and this left a legacy of bitterness. The collapse of money ruined pensioners and members of the middle class whose capital assets were in marks as cash or annuities, the annual income from capital investment. The life assurance policy of one wealthy man, intended to provide amply for his family and the education of a daughter proved to be just sufficient, after inflation had eroded it, to buy a loaf of bread. Three months' pension for a policeman's widow with four children bought three boxes of matches. Such people and others such as doctors and teachers who provided service were cruelly hit. To obtain food they resorted to barter, for instance, a pair of socks for a sack of potatoes. People parted with their furniture, clothing, and wedding jewelry. When they had nothing left they starved.⁴³⁸

Manufacturers, on the other hand, did well despite the inflation. So did farmers whose products were always in demand. They sold at high prices and bought property cheaply from men who were ruined. People who had access to foreign currency were luckiest of all. In Munich the hotel porters, receiving tips in foreign money, could afford private boxes at the opera. A cook in service with the eminent publishing firm of Ullstein was presented with a dollar. The dollar had then become worth so many untold millions of marks that a trust fund was set up to administer her dollar. So ludicrous was the economic situation that such stories abounded. Paper money became useless. Only things had value. The story is told of two women carrying a vast quantity of paper money in a laundry basket. They put it down for a moment and when they turned round the money was still there but the basket was gone.⁴³⁹

Anarchy threatened and on November 9, 1923 Adolf Hitler staged his unsuccessful putsch at Munich. One week later, the government introduced the Rentenmark, a new currency supposed to be backed by the agricultural and industrial strength of the nation. People turned to it like drowning men going after a lifebelt. The

“miracle of the Rentenmark” worked because the Germans desperately needed it to work. By 1924, the mark was steady again, but the ruined middle class had lost what faith it had placed in the Democratic government of Weimar (city in Germany). Forced only by another economic crisis, such as a depression, it might well be inclined to support a “strong man” — Hitler for instance.⁴⁴⁰

“Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau.” This confident statement was made on October 15, 1929 by Professor Irving Fisher, a distinguished economist at Yale University. Exactly two weeks later, on Tuesday, October 29, the New York stock market had crashed with a thud that had repercussions in the stock markets around the world.⁴⁴¹

In the months before the collapse a few voices had warned that the unparalleled boom under Presidents Coolidge and Hoover could not go on forever, that what went up had an ugly tendency to come down. But these pessimists were few and went unheeded. Ever since the Spring of 1927 the stock market had been climbing higher and higher. Why should it stop? In fact, the good years went back even further. Ever since 1923 life for a greater number of Americans than ever before was one of prosperity and plenty. Wheat farmers were a community that did not share in the general upsurge but for factory workers and businessmen, especially businessmen, the bandwagon rolled ever onward. Factory production was high, money readily available, and the stock market was booming.⁴⁴²

This availability of money was one of the reasons for the boom. Shares in the climbing market could be bought on margin, that is to say, the buyer paid the broker only a small portion of the cost of the share, the difference being made up with money borrowed by the broker from a bank and loaned to the buyer. As collateral for this loan the buyer left other securities with his broker on the understanding that if the value of the securities should happen to fall the broker would call upon him to increase the cash margin. So long as prices rose, of course, these calls never came. Buyers had to pay usury on the loan but the increase in share values covered this handsomely. Shares were bought on margin and sold later at a profit; then more shares were bought, on margin again, for later resale, again at a

profit. It hardly mattered what the share was — General Motors, Radio Corporation of America (RCA), United States Steel, Woolworth — they were all climbing. It is an unhappy fact of speculative buying that when prices are rising fast, whether the rises occur in land, or shares, or even tulip bulbs, people cease to look for the reason why they are rising. The items may be intrinsically worthless but what counts is that they can be resold at a profit — sometimes a very great profit. In 1928 and 1929 Americans became dazzled by the real possibility of becoming very rich very quickly.⁴⁴³

During 1927, the *New York Times* average of the price of 25 representative stocks rose from 181 to 245. Twelve months later it had risen a further 86 to 331. Brokers had once spoken in awe of the possibility of 5 million-share days, but now they were a frequent occurrence. In December the market sagged unnervingly. Shares in RCA that had climbed since the spring from 150 to 400 hurtled down to 296. But the market steadied and the upward rise resumed.⁴⁴⁴

Another “shake-out” occurred in March 1929. The fall sharply reduced the value of loan collateral and thousands of investors had the novel and unpleasant experience of receiving telegrams from their broker calling for more margin. The brokers sold the shares of those who could not provide the necessary cash. A “shake-out” technically describes a strengthening of the market at a lower level — but for individuals it can mean a disaster. Those who were “shaken out” abruptly woke from the rosy dream of easy riches as the shares they had bought with hard-earned savings were sold for less than the purchase price.⁴⁴⁵

The man credited with stopping the fall was Charles E. Mitchell, chairman of the powerful National City Bank, who announced that his bank was prepared to lend \$20 million “to avoid any dangerous crisis in the money market.” Mitchell, who was speculating heavily, had strong reasons for wanting the boom to continue, and his words rallied the market. Five years later Mitchell was arrested and tried on charges of tax evasion.⁴⁴⁶

In the crazy Summer of 1929 all thoughts of caution fled as the market went soaring up to levels few had even dreamed of. Between the end of May and the end of August it went up an aston-

ishing 100 points. The movement of shares was frequently manipulated by members of the stock exchange working together. A group would combine to buy a certain share and send its price up. This increase would be observed by investors watching the ticker tape in boardrooms and brokers' branch offices across the country. Suspecting something big in the offing they would hurry to buy and increase the price further. The manipulators would choose their moment to sell at a profit, and one of the arts of speculation that summer was to know someone who could tip you when to get in early on a forthcoming movement. The American writer Frederick L. Allen, who witnessed the crash and wrote an account of it in *Only Yesterday*, described the general involvement,

The rich man's chauffeur drove with his ears laid back to catch the news of an impending move in Bethlehem Steel; he held fifty shares himself on a twenty-point margin. The window-cleaner at the broker's office paused to watch the ticker for he was thinking of converting his laboriously accumulated savings into a few shares of Simmons. Edwin Lefevre [a knowledgeable journalist] told of a broker's valet who had made nearly a quarter of a million in the market, of a trained nurse who cleaned up thirty thousand following the tips given her by grateful patients.⁴⁴⁷

On September 3, 1929, the speculative, or Big Bull Market, reached its peak. The New York Times Index stood at 469; US Steel was at 262, Anaconda Copper at 131, RCA at 505. What led to the loss of confidence that followed no one knows for certain. The market did not immediately go into reverse. Over the next seven weeks shares rose and fell without noticeably altering the position. Professor Fisher made his historic pronouncement about the permanently high plateau, adding, "I expect to see the stock market a good deal higher than it is today within a few months." And on Monday, October 21, people began to sell. Sales totaled over 6,000,000 and there were some alarming plunges. Selling was less on Tuesday but

increased on Wednesday. October 24 was “Black Thursday.” As soon as the stock exchange opened large blocks of shares were put on the market and prices descended rapidly. But this was not panic selling. It was forced selling, the dumping of hundreds of thousands of shares held in the name of wretched investors whose margins were exhausted. For these people, their paper profits and money lost, their collateral gone to make what it could, “Black Thursday” shattered the dreams and hopes of a good future. As the forced selling continued, panic selling joined in. Prices fell further and faster. The ticker soon lagged far behind. The pyramid of high prices, honeycombed with margin loans, was collapsing under its own weight. By late morning, traders on the floor of the stock exchange were stampeding to unload. A wild roar could be heard by the crowd gathering outside. It was the death-cry of the Bull Market.⁴⁴⁸

Incredibly, the market rallied again. Richard Whitney, vice-president of the exchange — later to be tried and sentenced for misappropriating stock exchange funds — walked onto the floor as representative of the bankers’ pool and bought heavily in 20 assorted stocks. Again the volatile market recovered. On Friday and Saturday the market remained steady but the weekend gave people time to think. The falls of the previous week had eliminated most of the small investors; now it was to be the turn of the wealthy.⁴⁴⁹

Monday was bad enough with the New York Times Index dropping 49 points in the day. But Tuesday October 29, was the most devastating day in the history of the American Stock Exchange — the day the market went over the edge of Niagara. From the beginning of the session the storm to sell raged in full force. Vast amounts of shares were flung onto the market for what they would fetch. Men who had called themselves millionaires a week before were now irretrievably ruined. Large fortunes, small savings, were all wiped out. The cry was to sell at any price. The stock of the White Sewing Machine Company had fallen from 48 to 11 and at that point somebody — said to be an astute messenger boy for the exchange — had the bright idea of putting in an order to buy a block of shares at 1. In the absence of any other bids he got his stock at a dollar a share.⁴⁵⁰

By the end of the day, sales totaled 16,000,000, three times the business of a normal heavy day, and the Big Bull Market was dead. Billions of dollars worth of profit — some real, some paper — had vanished, and the office clerk, the chauffeur, the window-cleaner, the salesman had lost all their capital. In every town of the United States families fell suddenly into debt. The number of suicides told its own dismal story. Few people took what legend records as the popular way out: jumping from a high window. Most shot themselves, like the financier J.J. Riordan, who went to his bank on November 8 and took a pistol from a teller's cage, returned home and shot himself.⁴⁵¹

Even after October 29 the market kept on falling. It reached its lowest level of the year on November 13. At 224 the New York Times Index was now less than half its position a bare two months earlier. US Steel had fallen to 150, Anaconda Copper to 70. General Motors halved from 73 to 36. But these levels would come to seem high by later standards. The "Crash" was followed by the slump and the slump turned into the depression that would go on and on for year after hopeless year. Investors who bought at the prices of November 13, believing the bottom had been reached, saw the value of their purchases dwindle inexorably through 1930 and 1931 until in July 1932 US Steel had dropped to 22, General Motors to 8 and Anaconda Copper, from a high of 131, to 4. Ruin could go no further.⁴⁵²

It was 1931. Ed Paulsen, later to hold an administrative job with UNICEF, was just out of high school and there was no work. He put it this way,

I'd get up at five in the morning and head for the waterfront. Outside the Spreckles Sugar Refinery, outside the gates, there would be a thousand men. You know damn well there's only three or four jobs. The guy would come out with two little cops, "I need four guys." A thousand men would fight like a pack of Alaskan dogs to get through there. Only four of us would get through.⁴⁵³

His experience was in San Francisco but it was repeated in thousands of cities throughout the United States — and not only in the USA. The Stock Market Crash of October 1929 exposed the gaping holes in national economies throughout the world. The Australian economy was heavily reliant on the export of a single product: wool. The slump dashed the world demand for wool and set off a chain reaction through all the occupations and industries that were dependent on the prosperity of the wool trade. The number of unemployed rose to 25% of the Australian work force and spread acute distress throughout the country.⁴⁵⁴

Economists differ as to the relative importance of the various factors that caused the slump and the Great Depression that followed it. There is agreement, however, that well before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, all the signs of an economic downturn were present. Incomes were extremely unequally distributed and the significant investment money was concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group. When this group could no longer afford to invest, industry was deprived of the new plants and funds it needed for recovery. Heavy American investment abroad proved to be another hazard. Early in 1929 this money was called back to the United States to fuel the rising stock market. It never returned to Europe and the crash had disastrous consequences there, particularly in Germany, which plunged immediately into a severe slump, less than five years after emerging from the trauma of hyper-inflation. The result was widespread disillusion with the democratic forms of government that seemed to permit such crises.⁴⁵⁵

There had been slumps before but never one that lasted so long. In the United States it lasted right through the 1930s until the start of WWII. Throughout the industrial world, factories cut their workforces by 50%, 80%, or closed down completely. In July 1932 steel production in the United States was down to 12% of capacity. Men found themselves out of work and without any prospect of finding work in the foreseeable future. Without a job, without money, they joined bread and soup lines, shuffling along wearing shabby clothes that had once been good suits, their expressions flat and vacant.⁴⁵⁶

In Britain the heavy industries most affected — coal mining, iron and steel, shipbuilding, cotton textiles — were concentrated in Wales, Scotland, and northern England. It was to force the other parts of the country to take note of the sufferings of these “industrial graveyards” that the hunger marches were organized. Money was collected to supply boots for the marchers and in September 1932 huge contingents of out-of-work laborers converged on London. The shipbuilding town of Jarrow became a byword for poverty and suffering. Malnutrition there was widespread; death from tuberculosis was double the national average and so was child mortality. The British novelist J.B. Priestley described a visit to the town, “Wherever we went there were men hanging about, not scores of them but hundreds of thousands of them.”⁴⁵⁷

By the end of 1932, Britain’s unemployed totaled just under 3,000,000. Germany’s jobless totaled 6,000,000, and, at its worst, the United States figure reached 15,000,000 and no headway was made in reducing this shocking total until Franklin D. Roosevelt became the US president in 1933. In the week of his inauguration, he took the unprecedented course of closing all banks in the country for a week. During this long bank holiday the finances of each were examined and only those considered sound were allowed to reopen. Following this, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was established, guaranteeing all bank deposits up to \$10,000. This alleviated the small investor from the specter of total ruin.⁴⁵⁸

Roosevelt and his advisers launched a vigorous program of legislation to cure the country’s ills. Tens of thousands of men were recruited to work on such projects as reforestation and construction jobs as varied in scale as the huge Tennessee Valley dams and the Children’s Zoo in New York’s Central Park. But despite the real achievements of Roosevelt’s New Deal there were still 10,000,000 unemployed in 1939. It had been a grim and terrible decade, never to be forgotten by those who lived and suffered through it.⁴⁵⁹

This quick sojourn through some of the natural catastrophes and social crises in recent memory ought to demonstrate the mortal danger to individual and inter-social life. Man living through such dangers looks for a savior. Regrettably, once the immediate danger

is over man behaves as if nothing happened, to wit the financial meltdown in the US and Western Europe toward the end of the George W. Bush administration in the US (2008) — a collapse due to the same kind of greed and speculation (gambling) with the meager savings of ordinary people that led to the Great Depression. Now, the *āyah* can be considered with more understanding,

Say, “It is He alone who has the power to let loose upon you suffering from above you and from beneath your feet, or to confound you with mutual discord and let you try out the fear of one another.” Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth (6:65).

And with this level of scrutiny, the mental fog should be lifting from the fact that natural calamities and social predicaments befall communities and societies because they have violated and shamed the authority of Allah (ﷻ) on earth.

Few statistics or scientific methods, if any at all, will corroborate this point of view. This is not due to a particular lack of information or the absence of intellectuals who could develop the scientific models necessary to verify the fact that humanity suffers from periodic life-and-death catastrophes and crises. Rather, this dearth of proof results from the deficiency of institutions, establishments, and systems that are willing to investigate the correlation between desecrating and profaning God’s authority on the one hand and the catastrophes and crises on the other that strike with ferocity in this society or that throughout the course of human history. But suffering from such scientific insufficiency should not be a prelude to suffering from divine advice or from the truth of this matter that comes from Allah (ﷻ) Himself, “Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth.”

The real danger that pre-dates catastrophes and crises in human history — the actual source of impending ruination and dire straits in human societies — is the fact that some individuals,

elites, or cliques claim authority and power for themselves and then they impose their will and the subsidization of their excesses on the rest of the people. By doing so, these power-based authoritarians, in the practical sense of the word, “dislodge” God’s authority out of man’s conscience and community. This becomes the evil dynamic that sets catastrophes and crises into motion. It then becomes only a matter of time before calamity strikes. This is why it is of utmost importance for committed Muslims to distinguish themselves from a social system that contributes by its very nature to disasters and tragedies, **“Or He will confound you with mutual discord and let you experience the fear of one another.”**

God's Authority Is a Fact Man Cannot Afford to Deny

This lesson “snaps” the “cultural thread” that prophets have to deal with when they present Allah’s (ﷻ) message to their own people. Prophets always say to them, “*Yā qawmī!*: My people, my folks, my community.” Per this lesson, the prophetic affinity statement here has a time limit. The *āyāt* above establish the social position of the Prophet’s own common people — they refute the truth he brings them. And when the Prophet (ﷻ) tells them that he is not contributive to whatever results from their negation of Allah’s revealed truth, then the growing social distance setting in between them and him leaves them on their own to live up to the consequences of their God-denial.

- (6:66) And yet, to all this your people have given the lie, although it is the truth. Say [then], “I am not responsible for your conduct.
- (6:67) “Every tiding [from Allah] has a term set for its fulfillment: and in time you will come to know [the truth].”
- (6:68) Now, whenever you encounter those who talk diffidently about Our messages, steer away from them until they thrash about concerning other matters; and if Satan should ever cause you to forget [yourself], remain not, after recollection, in the company of such evildoing folk,
- (6:69) For whom those who are conscious of Allah are not at all accountable. Theirs, however, is the duty to admonish [the ones who are thrashing about], so that they might become conscious of Allah [His power presence].
- (6:70) And leave to themselves all those who, beguiled by the life of this world, have made play and passing delights their *dīn*; but remind [them] herewith that [in the life to come] every human being shall be held in pledge for whatever wrong he has done, and shall have none to protect him from Allah, and none to intercede for him — and though he offers any conceivable ransom, it shall not be accepted from him. It is [people such as] these who shall be held in pledge

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ
 مُّسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا
 فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِينَاكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا
 تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِىَ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 يَنْقُوتَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ ذِكْرِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْقُوتُونَ
 ﴿٦٩﴾ وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَوةُ
 الدُّنْيَا وَذَكَرَ بِهِمْ أَنْ تَبَسَّلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ
 دُونِ اللَّهِ وَئِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِنْ تَعَدَّلَ كُلٌّ عَدَلٍ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا
 أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قُلْ أَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا
 وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ
 الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانٌ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ أَتَيْنَا قُلْ
 إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأَمْرًا لِّسَلِيمٍ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَأَنْ
 أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَهُوَ
 الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ

فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ عَنَلِمِ
 الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

for the wrong they have done; for them there is [in the life to come] a draft of burning despair, and grievous suffering awaits them because of their persistent refusal to acknowledge the truth.

- (6:71) Say, “Shall we invoke, instead of Allah, something that can neither benefit us nor harm us, and [thus] turn around on our heels after Allah has guided us aright? — like one whom the satans have enticed into blundering after earthly lusts, the while his companions, trying to guide him, call out to him [from afar], ‘Come you to us!’” Say, “Verily, Allah’s guidance is the only guidance: and so we have been bidden to surrender ourselves unto the Sustainer of all the worlds,
- (6:72) “And to be constant in *ṣalāh* and conscious of Him: for it is He unto whom you all shall be gathered.”
- (6:73) And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with [an inner] truth — and whenever He says, “Be,” His word comes true; and His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet [of resurrection] is blown. He knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind: for He alone is the Truly Wise, the All-Aware (al-An‘ām:66–73).

The Estrangement of Muslims from *Mushriks* Is Natural

The Prophet is told not to socialize with those of his people who are impugning this divine *dīn*. The fact of the matter is that these people are dismissing Islam by making fun of it. They show no respect or courtesy toward it. Still, the Prophet (ﷺ) is told from on high to remind them of what they are doing, to caution them of its consequences, to press on with explaining the truth about this whole issue, and to place them on notice of the dire results that will befall them if they continue their contemptuous behavior.

The major development here is that now the Prophet (ﷺ) and those who are with him are a unique social trend independent of the norms and values of the society they once belonged to. At this point, the two groups of people are two separate entities. Their positions now are irreconcilable, and the rift unbridgeable. The truth and justice about Islam and the falsehood about their status quo, their vested interests, and their imitative religion have become alienated, unyielding, and oppositionist. There is no amount of blood relationship, no quantity of relatives, no common ancestry, and no shared culture that is capable of straddling this gulf. This *dīn* was not tasked to man so that man can fit it into his own national, ethnic, sectarian, or racial container. This *dīn*, its truth and justice, bind together like-minded people and detach from them the antithetical.

And yet, all this [revealed truth] your people [O Muhammad] are refuting, although it is the *ḥaqq*. Say, “I am not responsible for your conduct. Every matter [from Allah] has a term set for its fulfillment: and in time you will come to know [the truth]” (6:66–67).

These words are meant to bolster the confidence of the Prophet (ﷺ) and all people who find themselves in his position when their own people turn hostile and antagonistic. There are two elements at work here: the opposition of society with all its institutions and material powers, and uttering the words of truth and justice, even though the balance of power seems to be in favor of society and its

power structure. The reassuring words of Allah reiterate that this whole affair is in the immediate and careful supervision of Allah (ﷻ); He, not the powers that be, is going to have the final word on this matter. All the objections coming from society carry no weight and will have no effect on the bearers of truth and the advocates of divine justice.

This is when Allah (ﷻ) tells His Prophet to sublimate and free himself from his own society — its culture and its constitution. They should know that the Prophet (ﷺ) will not be able to do anything for them while they continue to walk the path of self-destruction. He is not able to switch their hearts on or off; he can only present them with the truth, the fact, and the *ḥaqq*, and from that point onward, their own choice, will, and decision will be responsible. This whole matter is going to take its course; and the outcome is what is determined by Allah, **“Every matter has a term set for its fulfillment; and in time you will come to know [the truth].”**

What is being witnessed in the dynamics of this *āyah* is the unavoidable circumstance that emerges when Prophets (ﷺ) begin to speak to their people in accommodating terms but then end up having to face the fact that their own people are turning against Allah (ﷻ), His *dīn*, and His prophet. This is the Islamic stage of social alienation. Alienation itself is nothing new to the human condition. The phenomenon of alienation has received attention from philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, theologians, and many others. In what has become of “Christian” theology, chiefly theologians of existentialist background have used the notion of *alienation* or *estrangement* to explain the concept of sin. Estrangement is a term used by some theologians to indicate the human state of sin due to the Fall, as portrayed in their explanations of the symbolic story of Adam and Eve (ﷺ) in the Book of Genesis. Some believe the word *estrangement* better conveys today, in the language of existentialism, the meaning of sin. The human situation, due to the Fall is one of sin or estrangement, the fact that “man as he exists is not what he essentially is and ought to be.” The word *sin* cannot, however, be abandoned since it protects the fact that estrangement is personal and the result of human freedom and re-

sponsibility. Thus these types of “Christian” theologians say that man’s predicament is estrangement, but his estrangement is sin. Accordingly therefore, the word *estrangement* is preferable to sin in conveying the universal and inescapable fallen state of existence, since popular belief conceives of sin, not as a power that rules the human will, but as *sins*, or mere deviations from particular moral law or conventions.

Thus, estrangement is described as *unbelief*, as *hubris*, and as *concupiscence*. Unbelief is the total turning away from God and toward the self. This disruption of human relations with God results in absorption with the self, or what the Greeks called *hubris*. It leads to the self-elevation of persons beyond their finite limits. They make themselves existentially the center of the world. The insatiable human desire to draw the whole of experience and the world into or around the self is *concupiscence*. This ravenous desire and acquisitiveness can be seen in all aspects of human life, for example, in the self’s desire for wealth, power, sexual fulfillment, and knowledge. For some the term *original sin* points to the universal fact or destiny of human estrangement. Individual sin is simply the actualization of the universal act of estrangement. The destined or inevitable character of estrangement does not, however, nullify sin as a matter of personal freedom and responsibility.

In classical (Christian) theology, sin was held to be the state of being turned away from God (*aversion a Deo*). Theologians have seen this as the basic form of alienation and have claimed that it is correlated with other forms — alienation from nature or the sense of not being at home in the world; alienation from other people who, in the absence of God, no longer have a “family relationship”; and even alienation from oneself, for if people are creatures or children of God, then a relation to God is necessary for their well-being.

Many atheistic philosophers would dispute this correlation. In the last century, Feuerbach argued that it is precisely belief in God that alienates man from his own humanity, because he projects all the desirable human qualities upon God and attributes to himself only what is weak and base in human nature. Marx followed him in teaching that religion causes man to revolve around a false sun

(God) to the neglect of his own human well-being, though he disagreed that religion is the fundamental cause of alienation, seeing it rather as a symptom of production and the area of work. Nietzsche and Sartre have both taught that belief in a transcendent God is inimical to a true humanity, for if everything in the long run is decided by God, human freedom and transcendence are illusory. All of these atheistic philosophers have considered God to be an oppressive power and have believed that the abolition of God is a necessary step in the liberation of humanity for a more truly human existence.

It can hardly be denied that some theologians have presented God in oppressive terms. On the other hand, the atheism of the past two centuries or more is so far from having abolished alienation that it has rather intensified it. Theologians may have been overeager to suggest that alienation from God leads to other forms of alienation, but it is even less plausible to claim that these alienations stem from belief in God.

These Western definitions of alienation are far removed from the practical attitude and active behavior Allah (ﷻ) expects of His servants. The *āyāt* above cite the real-life alienation that Muslims encounter when they live and move ahead with their God-given responsibility of going public with Allah's scripture and bringing into actual life the persona of Rasūl-Allāh (ﷺ). This *āyah* is food for thought, especially for those times when the committed Muslims find themselves officially or unofficially excommunicated from their societies. We, the Qur'anic and prophetic Muslims, should be able to cast out these same societies from our environment of truth and our relationship with Allah (ﷻ).

After such delineation between a growing society of *imān* and a cringing society of opponents, the Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims by extension, are instructed from on high to vacate the latter's contemptuous company, even for purposes of *balāgh* and *da'wah* (communication and *inter-dīn* discussions). Islam merits courteous regard and an attitude of esteem. But if society begins to show flippancy and a lack of respect for this *dīn* then its bearers have no right being part of that hostile society. Disrespect and disparagement, whether expressed verbally or by actions toward the

Prophet and his message, carry the same offensive meaning. Any committed Muslims who socialize with a segment of society that is offensive and defamatory of this *dīn* are in reality silent participants in such offense and defamation. There is nothing more treasured and revered to a committed Muslim than his *dīn*. If, in the course of life's routine and day-to-day affairs, a committed Muslim unwittingly finds himself in such a company, it should be second nature to him to wake up and realize the unfriendly fellowship he is in, and then to withdraw or simply leave such assemblage,

Now, whenever you meet such as indulge in [profane] discussion about Our *āyāt*, turn away from them until they begin to talk of other things; and if Satan should ever cause you to lapse, remain not, after recollection, in the company of such offending folk (6:68).

It is important to note that these *āyāt* were remedying a human condition within the uncordial and unsympathetic ambiance of Makkah. In this climate and at this stage, there was no order from on high to bear arms, mobilize forces, and fight wars. Outnumbered Muslims had to observe the realities of life. The obvious direction of Islamic affairs in Makkah at that time sought to avoid armed conflict with the *mushriks*. Thus, this lesson instructs the Prophet (ﷺ) not to sit down, intermingle, and socialize with these *mushriks* as they assault the *dīn* of Allah (ﷻ) and poke fun at it without a shred of understanding or appreciation. In a society that is overwhelmingly anti-Islamic there may be times when an individual committed Muslim gets caught up in moments that turn out to be contrary to Allah and his *dīn*; and if that is the case this Muslim should divert himself from such circumstances as soon as possible.

On the contrary, however, once the committed Muslims gained a power base in Madinah they were no longer expected to vacate such assemblages of hostility against Islam. In Madinah, Islam became a full-fledged state; and thus the Muslims were no longer an alienated people, an oppressed minority, or considered a subversive threat. When the committed Muslims acquired through

conviction, popularity, and consensus their Islamic State in Madinah and the *mushriks* wanted to follow through on their hostile intentions, the Islamic leadership and state in Madinah were willing and able to take them on militarily instead of enduring the alienation and estrangement that was imposed on them in Makkah. This decisive use of force by empowered Muslims in Madinah was meant to correlate with the arrogant use of force by the *mushriks*. Muslims in an Islamic state with an Islamic leadership honoring the standards of the Qur'an and the Sunnah do not make fun of other people's faith, prophets, or scriptures. And such Muslims do not permit the people of other "religions" to make fun of Allah's *dīn* and His Prophets (ﷺ). There are no double standards and there is no favoritism.

The parting line between committed Muslims and contentious *mushriks* is reinforced by the following heavenly instructions,

...those who are conscious of Allah [His power] are not accountable for [the *mushriks*'] proceedings; theirs, however, is the duty to reprove [these evildoers], so that they might become conscious of Allah [His power] (6:69).

The word *ẓālimīn* in the above *āyah* refers to people who are guilty of practical and social injustice. Sometimes referred to as *evildoers*, other times as *sinner*s, they are more accurately those who do injustice to self and society. Many times in the Qur'an, *ẓālimīn* is used in reference to the *mushriks*.

Some "enlightened" Muslims think that nationalism and Islam are compatible. To spare the reader a long plunge into the meanings of nationalism, let it be said that if a particular nationalism is defined by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, if it is molded in reality by Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet, then no Muslims should have any problem with that flavor of nationalism. However, when this argument is passed over the cold waft of reality, the inescapable conclusion is that no nationalism has ever gained its acceptance through the agency of scripture and apostles. The long and short of

Banū Isrā'īl in the Qur'an is that they tried to “squeeze” scripture into a notion of tribe and it never worked. Hence, it would be futile to have Arabians, Persian, Turks, and other nationalities try to compress Islam into their own national character. When opponents of Allah and the Prophet disagreed with the Qur'an and the Sunnah they could only fall back on their national character, their cultural context, their historical narrative, and their “group-solidarity” to try to rebut Islam’s momentum. And when they came out in public to take issue with Muhammad (ﷺ) and his companions, the line was drawn, as outlined in these *āyāt*. Furthermore, their witless and vacuous character shines through the accurate words of the next *āyah*,

And cast off to themselves those who, captivated by the life of this world, have made play and passing delights of their *dīn*; but remind [them] herewith that [in the life to come] every human being shall be held in pledge for whatever wrong he has done, and shall have none to protect him from Allah, and none to intercede for him; and though he offer any conceivable ransom, it shall not be accepted from him. It is [people such as] these who shall be held in pledge for the wrong they have done — for them there is [in the life to come] a draft of burning despair, and grievous suffering awaits them because of their persistent refusal to acknowledge the truth [of Allah’s power] (6:70).

The first thing notable here is the Muslims’ parting from those who make fun of their own convictions, beliefs, and creeds — those who mock their own *dīn*. And it does not matter whether they are making fun of their *dīn* verbally or practically. Any people or society who are not serious about their *dīn* by having it operate as their devotional system, their value system, and their legal system, have reduced their *dīn* to a joke. Those who equate a value system and a legal system coming from God to other value systems and legal systems concocted by man have diminished their *dīn* to a

caper. Those who speak about the *ghayb*, which is an integral part of scripture and revelation, as if it were some laughing matter, have minimized their *dīn* to a prank. Those who speak about the financial system in Islam as if it were some primitive formula of wealth distribution have contracted their *dīn* to a frivolity. Those who speak about modesty, morality, and chastity — basic elements of this *dīn* — as if these were features of preliterate agricultural, feudalistic, or bourgeoisie societies that will eventually wither away are also poking fun at the fundamentals of this *dīn*. By inferring or categorically stating that women are oppressed by God and scripture, those who speak about sexual or gender relations within scriptural norms as if they are barbaric, oppressive, or chauvinistic codes of behavior are also making a laughing matter out of this serious *dīn*. Preserving the chastity of women is no joke, and the scriptural way of life that does this is not a mirth. The reason for all these and other antics breaking out from time to time and from modernity to modernity can be trailed to the fact that God the Authority is no longer a fact of social and organizational life. There are those who say that man is his own sovereign, that he is entitled to his full freedom, and that he is the lord of his own destiny. And out of this man-centered world comes a society at odds with God and at cross purposes with His servants. This type of society cannot have Muslims assimilate into it, integrate into it, or melt into it. Never. This type of anti-God society will eventually meet its inevitably ignominious destiny.

Secondly, the Prophet (ﷺ) and all his disciples until the end of time, even though they have to step out of the psychology of such a society, have to continue to show its members their errant ways whenever possible and as opportunities may present themselves. In this manner the committed Muslims do not compromise the seriousness of their message and mission and do not dumb themselves down to a degree that omits the serious offenses committed against God in such societies. The people of these quarrelsome societies have to know that they are hostages of their works and deeds that deviate away from God and His guidance. They also have to know that no one is going to be able to ransom them from

the destiny they have initiated for themselves by countering God and by clashing with His will. The Qur'anic wording is wonderful,

...but remind them [the offending *mushriks*] herewith that [in the life to come] every human being shall be held in debt for whatever wrong he has done, and shall have none to protect him from Allah, and none to intercede for him; and though he offer any conceivable ransom, it shall not be accepted from him (6:70).

Seeing oneself in such an intractable position on the Day of Reckoning is not funny. Pity the human being or social order that cannot distinguish between what is to be taken seriously with due respect and other things that are humorous.

Those, though, who dilute their *dīn* into a passing joke or a mockery, those who are enthralled by the fantasies of the carnal world are the types who will be paying for their actions by incurring their own man-made results,

It is [people such as] these that shall be held in debt for the wrong they have done — for them there is [in the life to come] a beverage of burning liquid, and grievous suffering awaits them because of their persistent refusal to acknowledge the truth [of Allah's power] (6:70).

Delving deeper into the meaning of this *āyah*, when Allah (ﷻ) says “their *dīn*” this is in reference to the final *dīn* — Islam — as it is the *dīn* that belongs to everyone. So even though their minds and tempers are against it, it still belongs to them. And even though they do not want to make a claim to it, it is still theirs as it is everyone's. Nonetheless, here they are making fun of what is by divine will theirs for the taking — their God-given *dīn*.

In our time, there are individuals, states, and media organizations that poke fun at the Qur'an, the Prophet, and Islam all at once. In times when the committed Muslims have no power to correct this disrespectful behavior, they should shun these mod-

ern-day *mushriks*. But when the Muslims do have their power base, their power society, and their power leadership, they will deal with these types in ways that will bring honor and respect to the name of Allah (ﷻ) and to the history of prophets and scriptures. No one, whether friend or foe, should doubt the Muslims’ resolve to live by their principles and the way they honor Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

Future Planning without God: a Flirtation with Disaster

The last few *āyāt* of this lesson reinforce the root cause of all this conceptual instability: the fact that the issue of authority has not been settled satisfactorily in the minds of scholars and in the lives of societies,

Say, “Shall we invoke, instead of Allah, something that can neither benefit us nor harm us, and [thus] turn around on our heels after Allah has guided us aright? — like one whom the satans have enticed into blundering after earthly lusts, while his companions, trying to guide him, call out to him [from afar], ‘Come to us!’” Say, “Verily, Allah’s guidance is the only guidance: and so we have been bidden to surrender ourselves unto the Sustainer of all the worlds, and be systemic in the *ṣalāh* and be on guard [concerning Allah’s power presence] (6:71).

The word *say* spoken by Allah (ﷻ) to His Prophet (ﷺ) makes one feel that the weight of the issue commences from Allah Himself, “Say [O Muhammad], ‘Do we call upon things/beings besides Allah that cannot do us any good or any harm?’” Therefore, whatever and whomever these people are invoking, calling, or beseeching other than Allah have no value, no advantage, and no influence. People call on “superiors” when they are afraid, when they are in need, when they are confused, and when they are weak. And in the case of Arabian society whomever they may have been

calling upon — an idol or a graven image, a rock or a tree, a spirit or an angel, a demon idol or a human idol — none of them were capable of delivering any good or any evil. These are less than capable of effectuating anything worthy or worthless. The only thing that will happen in life is what materializes in accordance with the will of Allah and by His reckoning.

And as if to bring out the absurdity of turning to semi-gods and demigods, there is a follow-up sentence, **“...and [thus] turn around on our heels after Allah has guided us aright?”** This is an obvious reference to backward motion, meaning that if the committed Muslims were to appeal to other gods, they would be losing ground, going in the wrong direction, and be diametrically opposed to Allah (ﷻ), their Creator and Guide. The picture gains more clarity, **“...like one whom the satans have enticed into blundering after earthly lusts, the while his companions, trying to guide him, call out to him [from a distance], ‘Come you to us!’”**

This delivers a sharp picture of those types of people who are scattered in their thoughts and emotions between multiple sources of authority, torn between or among many forms of divinity, and confused as to how to proceed with confidence and courage, **“...like one whom the demons have attracted into blundering in pursuit of earthly lusts [and luxuria].”** This is an image of a person caught between satans who pull him in their direction and companions who are trying to show him the right direction. He becomes confused and stupefied, as he is being roasted by his own psychology. Uncertainty, ambivalence, and obscurity are torture. Human nature being what it is there are those in life who will turn from their Islam and all the confidence and certainty therein to non-Islam with all the trouble, doubt, and disarray therein. For those who are disoriented, distracted, and disturbed,

Say, “Indeed, Allah’s guidance is the only guidance: and so we have been ordered to surrender to the Sustainer of all the worlds, and to be systemic in the *ṣalāh* and conscious of Him [and His power]” (6:71–72).

This is where the gap in the non-Muslim mind and the breach in non-Islamic societies is to be found. These minds and societies do not have a sense of guidance. They work out their five-, ten-, or fifty-year plans — only to realize that these plans are not getting them anywhere.

Most human beings, whether as an individual or in association with others, prepare to shape the future. In other words, they plan. With the evolution of high-technology industrialism, competing planners have invented many different methods, each with its own respected jargon, literature, interest groups, and high priests. Some make special efforts to coordinate the specialists and guide results. All are involved, despite frequent protestations to the contrary, in efforts to get, keep, and use some degree of “power of influence.”

Much of the important planning in life has always taken place on a relatively small scale. Thus, parents may plan for the number of children and the time for them to be conceived, students for learning certain subjects and preparing for future careers, and teachers for improving a curriculum or writing books. Managers of police departments, fire departments, and hospitals plan the deployment of their usually scarce resources. On a larger scale, governments plan to promote economic growth, to direct growth in particular sectors, and to cushion the effects of the business cycle. Government planning emerged in response to discontent with the effects of market competition in which governments only facilitated private transactions. During the 20th century, planning has taken two distinct forms, central command and democratic planning. With relatively good confidence, it can be asserted that none of these plans refer to, consider, or consult scripture and God in what people are going to be doing.

Considered a success by some in industrial civilization is the maturation of government-supported competitive markets. Over the centuries, small urban spaces for the display of goods by farmers and artisans have become part of national and transnational markets for the exchange of goods and services, including specialized facilities for labor, land, and finance. This “maturation” took place largely as the result of government policies in Western Europe and

North America during the 18th and 19th centuries. On the one hand, as celebrated in the vast literature of *laissez-faire*, governments withdrew, often reluctantly, from various forms of state monopoly and control of private activities. On the other hand, governments took on the responsibility of “[an] enormous increase in continuous, organized, and controlled intervention.” This has involved public action to protect private property, to build up police and military forces, to create money and banking systems, to regulate weights and measures, and to maintain judicial machinery for enforcing contracts. Governments also enlarge opportunities for business investment by providing infrastructures of roads, water supply, public health and education, and by developing foreign policies that support business operations abroad. And all this is and was done without God’s authority on anyone’s mind.⁴⁶⁰

With these supports, private companies can plan ahead for greater profits, market penetration, technological advancement, and political influence. Vigorous efforts throughout an enterprise may be promoted through both fear of failure and the expectation of the greater rewards that can flow from success. This often leads to higher quality of output, an improved range of goods or services, and increased efficiency. Through mass production and reduced costs and profits per unit, companies may not only earn larger total profits but also facilitate long-term growth in the volume of goods and services available to a society. With regard to an individual employing his capital in support of domestic industry (not industry as a whole), in seeking mainly his own gain, he may thus promote public interests that were not part of his intention. The rationale and psychology here is void of God, scripture, and justice for others.⁴⁶¹

Going astray may result from imperfect information, serious error, changing conditions, or being outsmarted by rivals. Successful planning may impose unforeseen damages upon employees, consumers, or the environment; these are rarely reflected in a firm’s accounts. The healthy effects of market competition may be offset by mergers, cartels, or price leadership understandings, most of which are legitimated or tolerated by government. Such arrangements tend to concentrate economic and political power, keep or push se-

lected prices up, or manufacture shortages by setting ceilings on production. In periods of seriously short supply, unregulated competition can lead to dangerous outbreaks of hoarding, speculation, profiteering, and political unrest. And in all this frantic rivalry and competition between market and government, still God is not on the organizers' and theoreticians' minds.⁴⁶²

In pre-industrial or industrializing societies, competitive markets have expanded the opportunities for business people and landowners to live longer and accumulate more wealth. But aggregate growth of income and population has often been associated with an enormous growth in the number of poor people with few expectations of escaping absolute or relative deprivation. Low-paid jobs, joblessness, and massive underemployment provide too little of the purchasing power needed for profitable investment to meet domestic needs. The most disastrous byproducts of competitive markets have been the sharp economic fluctuations of the “capitalist business cycle,” and the political turbulence resulting therefrom, during problems that have been moderated but not eliminated by greater expansion of government intervention and coordination. All of these market interests and government forces were planning whatever they wanted to do without drawing on scripture or honoring the authority of God.⁴⁶³

A life without Allah's (ﷻ) guidance gave the world in the last couple of centuries the ravages of competitive capitalism and its counterpart: centralized government planning. During the period from Francis Bacon to Henri de Saint-Simon (17th and 18th centuries), the idea of unlimited progress through science-based central command became an article of faith among Western European elites. With rationality as their guide, redesigned governments would construct ideal societies. In this spirit, socialists promised that national control of economic affairs would end exploitation and promote economic justice. Poverty, colonialism, and war would be replaced by prosperity, independence, and peace. Revolutionary socialists argued that with the forceful expropriation of private property, the immense productive forces of technology, once freed from the fetters imposed by capitalists, would operate “in accordance

with a common plan” (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*). Humankind could then gradually pass from scarcity to abundance, and the history of human freedom would begin. Evolutionary socialists disagreed. They campaigned instead for welfare state reforms, which were slowly legitimated as an alternative to the specter (usually exaggerated) of violent revolution. These reforms helped make market operations more productive, allowed increases in living standards, and, by alleviating poverty, joblessness, and urban decay, undermined support for revolutionary movements in developed societies.⁴⁶⁴

In 1917, when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, they had no idea how to run an economy “in accordance with a common plan.” At first, Lenin thought that capitalism had reduced management to “the extraordinary simple operations — which any literate person can perform — of checking and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing receipts” (*State and Revolution*, 1917). Later, he introduced war communism modeled largely on German central planning during WWI. He then sponsored a state-led scientific management program avowedly based on US corporate principles of promoting labor discipline and productivity. A dominant slogan was “American technique plus Soviet power.” By the time that “American technique” was already oriented toward decentralization, Stalin’s Five-Year Plans were devised on the principle of running the economy like One Big Company — but with more concentration at the top than capitalist companies usually attempted. The Stalinists and their successors rivaled (some would say exceeded) anti-communist fascist regimes in concentrating political power, suppressing opposition, and building an empire. They counterbalanced the incompetence and corruption of their central bureaucracies with remarkably efficient mind control and public relations. They won international prestige for abolishing unemployment (allegedly), helping to defeat the fascist Axis powers in WWII, supporting many anti-colonial movements, and opposing apartheid in South Africa. Although this was not part of their original intention, the Stalinists and their successors produced enough literate people, scientists, intellectuals, and artists to help dismantle the empire and fragment the system of central command.⁴⁶⁵

In the West, the worldwide capitalist depression of 1929–1939 was so deep and long that it shook faith in *laissez-faire* ideologies and led to greater expansion of government intervention and coordination. In 1939, as WWII began in Europe, many people saw that it was the war, far more than welfare-state planners, that would conquer the Great Depression. In the name of “winning the peace,” postwar planning became a widespread activity. Books, conferences, “think-tank” seminars, and government reports offered a plethora of ideas on both transitional reconversion and longer-term policies. Under the banner of planning for full employment, many governments accepted the responsibility of preventing another general mass depression. In the United States, a loose policy guidance system (abjuring the dangerous word *planning*) was set up under the Employment Act of 1946. In France, “indicative planner” brought business and labor leaders together to set national goals; these were then backed up by government credit policies. The Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Switzerland, and Scandinavian countries went still further in getting business, banking, and labor elites together to promote overall growth and help tame “the business cycle.” This is a solid portion of contemporary human history in which man is planning and strategizing without any guidance from God.⁴⁶⁶

Procedurally, democratic planners tend to follow John Dewey’s earlier concept of “a continuously planning society” instead of one with fixed blueprints.⁴⁶⁷ In diverse ways, they combine fiscal and monetary policy with government interventions on behalf of managed competition, a strategy advocated by Eugene V. Rostow for the United States.⁴⁶⁸ Cold War military spending, the importance of which was exaggerated by radicals and denied by conservative economists, has also been a factor. Thus in countries of “constitutional” capitalism, downturns, now labeled “recessions,” have been relatively short and mild. Mass depression has been confined to ethnic ghettos and areas hit by plant closings that kill off basic industries, or farm failures. In developing countries, the record is much more mixed. When national economic growth has occurred, it has often been accompanied by large-scale underemployment and inflation.⁴⁶⁹

During the Cold War, the sustained tension between the United States and the Soviet Union seemed permanent. Thus, planning to “win the peace” rarely occurred. With the surprisingly sudden collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991, no government seemed prepared for either short-term conversion or longer-term growth. For the new regimes in former communist countries, the transition to welfare state capitalism has proved enormously difficult. Privatization measures have placed former state properties under the control of former state oligarchies. *Laissez-faire* ideologies have diverted attention from the governmental activities and the intermediary organizations of civil society without which competitive markets cannot mature. Nowhere in the world does central command wither away easily. In countries of high-technology capitalism, conversion of military industries to peacetime pursuits is particularly difficult under conditions of slow-growth stagnation or recession. In poor countries, development planners can no longer play one side of the Cold War against the other. Throughout the world, planners have begun to debate alternative approaches to a truly global political economy. We, the committed Muslims who are capable of reading and understanding this Qur’anic scripture, ask, “Where is God, His revealed value system, His bequeathed justice system, and His inspired legal system; where is all this in these recent hundreds of years of planning?”⁴⁷⁰

The most intensive planning takes place at the higher levels of transnational corporations and such agencies as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The relevance of these efforts to the fulfillment of basic rights and fundamental freedoms will long be a matter of debate. Truly democratic planning without guidelines, discipline, and purpose as per Allah’s scriptural trust is doomed to cyclical failures, upheavals, and, yes, wars. Even if painful changes coming from secular minds and programs were to impact culture and power structure there can be no sense of direction, no purpose for life, and no cooperative efforts if Allah (ﷻ) does not touch and move the deepest convictions and motivations in human nature and social order. Even if non-scriptural ideologies and philosophies were to effect change at the family level, within school systems, at

workplaces, and even within the status quo religious hierarchies, there still would be dissatisfaction — enough of it to destabilize normal life patterns and strain the God-given psychology of man. Even if all the developing countries were to succumb to the economic priorities of the developed countries, the social and moral fabric of societies will still be looking for a way out of the human mess that everyone will find themselves in. Any resulting release of intelligence and affirmation of moral commitment would inevitably be resisted by the elites, technocrats, bureaucrats, and patriarchists who regard democracy as too precious to be wasted on the many.⁴⁷¹

In this labyrinth of distractions, diversions, and deviations, when man proves to himself how far he has forsaken God, in this climate of uncertainty and wavering, the Muslims are called upon to declare to all and sundry,

...and [correspondingly] we have been ordered [by Allah] to surrender ourselves unto the Sustainer of all the worlds, and to standardize the *ṣalāh* and be conscious of Allah [His power presence] (6:71–72).

This would mean that whenever the Muslims assume these positions of planning for societies, populations, and humanity, they will do so with reference to Allah, with information from Allah, with integration through Allah, and with reliance upon Allah (ﷻ). In doing that they will be better qualified to deliver justice to everyone. Allah is the sustainer of all forms of life, all spheres of life, all levels of life, and all expressions of life. The committed Muslims will not fall into the mistakes of God-deserters who plan for their own interests. They plan for their elites and the masses suffer; they plan for their race and humanity suffers; they plan for their countries and the continents suffer; and they plan for their industries and the environment suffers. When we, the committed Muslims, assume these responsibilities the suffering will be to a minimum because we are actively cognizant of the fact that Allah is the Sovereign and Sustainer of all manifestations and aspects of life. We will not govern by a stark disregard for the authority of

Allah as has been the case with the secularists, the materialists, and the non-scripturalists of the past few hundred years.

It has been too long a time now. It is time for humanity to return to the authority of God. How long do we have to continue to kill values and resurrect what could not even be characterized as principles? How long are we going to disregard the laws that come to us from heaven and press on with laws incapable of deterring crime, hostile societies, warmongering classes of people, and a failing political system all over the world? Why is it that we do not have serious, thinking people looking for God where they can find Him, right here in this eternal and impeccable Scripture — the guiding Qur'an?

Doing this requires society to “...constitute the *ṣalāh* and defend against His [power countenance].” Many Muslims read this to mean merely praying and piety. The secular mind would read it correctly that way. But in the Qur'anic mind, the *iqāmah* of *ṣalāh* means that the *ṣalāh* becomes a social value in society. The *ṣalāh* becomes public, it becomes standard, and it becomes normal, regular, and commonplace. By this definition and understanding, a social *ṣalāh*, a perennial *ṣalāh*, and a systemic *ṣalāh* still do not exist. Correspondingly, there is no public, popular, prevalent, and shared common feeling of Allah's (ﷻ) corrective power that should be averted. The *qiradah* (rapacious) and the *khanāzīr* (gluttonous) have power as many of the rulers of Muslim lands acknowledge through their policies and pronouncements. But, in the bogus (and fleeting) reality of today, Allah (ﷻ) does not have the power to be acknowledged through such policies and pronouncements.

At this point, the committed Muslims are presented with the string of facts facing them in the following *āyah*,

...for it is He unto whom you all shall be gathered. And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the truth — and whenever He says, “Be,” His word comes true; and His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet [of resurrection] is blown. He knows all that is beyond the

reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind: for He alone is the Truly Wise, the All-Aware (6:72–73).

When the Muslims set out acknowledging Allah’s authority, they also acknowledge the facts attending that authority, some of which are the fact of the assembly on the Final Day (*al-ḥaṣhr*), the fact of creation (*al-khalq*), the fact of authorization, the fact that He knows perceptual reality and non-perceptual reality (the *shahādah* and the *ghayb*), and that He is the repository of wisdom and realization, **“For it is He unto whom you shall all be gathered.”**

It is not enough to artificially read about this fact in this Book. And it is not enough to mention this fact every once and then in a prayer or sermon. This fact has to be part of the social psychology of an Islamic collective. Thereby, when masses in their millions are aware in a real and sizeable sense that they will be gathered on the Day of Judgement they will not be anxious to get away with worldly pleasures, to exploit other people, or to vandalize the resources of the earth. When they acknowledge within the very core of their beings that they will be returning to Allah (ﷻ) and then answer for their social and political behavior here on earth, then it is this sense of accountability that will temper the burgeoning oppression on earth. This fact has been taken out of Western public life, out of Western discourse, and out of any decision-making body in Europe and America, hence their ruthless plans and their potentially apocalyptic policies.

“And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the truth.” This is the fact of the matter: the earth and the heavens were created as a matter of *ḥaqq*. In the very minutest particle of the planets and space there is the element of *ḥaqq*. One of the best ways to render the meaning of *ḥaqq* into English is *something so true that it is real*. This is why any tricks or injustice that typify the human management of earth go against the grain of creation itself — such attempts are doomed to failure. The *ḥaqq* is elemental, inborn, and indecomposable in the making of the material world from heaven to earth and back.

Beyond the obvious, there is an inner component of this *ḥaqq*. A committed Muslim may feel that he stands on the basis of this *ḥaqq* when he adheres and honors his God-given principles. In doing so he connects with the larger *ḥaqq* that permeates existence and life itself. Furthermore, he connects with Allah (ﷻ), as another *āyah* says, **“That is due to the fact that Allah is the Ḥaqq” (22:6).**

What may appear to be an inner self-assertion of the *ḥaqq* turns out to have an extension in the larger material world around, and then turns out to have a reference in the Divine Himself. Therefore, all the facades and forces counter to the Ḥaqq are trivial and insignificant. But where are the Muslims of principle who can stand their ground on the principles of the Ḥaqq? Muslims are wronged all over the world; they are colonized, dehumanized, and in some cases objects of genocidal policies — yet in none of these tragic developments are there Muslims who will stand for the Ḥaqq.

It would be interesting to run some studies on the psychology of the world criminals (kings, presidents, prime ministers, corporate CEOs, etc.) who are in violation of this *ḥaqq* across the board. How do they feel about this? Are there any feelings of guilt? Or is their blind hatred of unknown Muslims so overwhelming that they can go on and do this for generations to come? The problem with Muslims today is that they do not have the institutions to take these facts from the Qur’an to the front lines, to the battlefields, to the killing grounds, and to the annihilation theater where Muslims are the victims, so that they can measure how far they are committed to this *ḥaqq* and how reactive their enemies may be.

Allah’s (ﷻ) authority is such that **“...whenever He says, ‘Be,’ His word comes true.”** This should never be dismissed by Muslims in the middle of a long struggle with satanic structures and states. Allah’s will is absolute, His sovereignty is dominant. This is equally so in matters of creation, design, development, change, and replenishment. This is the side the Muslims should be on. This is the side that cannot lose. And this is the Islamic destiny.

“His word comes true [His word is the truth].” This applies to His word of creation — **“*kun fa-yakūn*: Be, and it is.”** It applies to His instructions concerning human life, human behavior, and

human interactions. In all this, He tells us to yield to His authority and ascendancy. It applies to His words about the past, the present, and the future. It also applies to His words about genesis, human development, the Final Day Assembly, and compensation. He says the truth about all these matters. Where else can we obtain this truth? And if we cannot get it anywhere else, it would behoove us to behave as His inferiors. For when we are jointly His inferiors, then we are all equal, and there are no superiors among us.

“And His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet [of resurrection] is blown.” This will happen on the Day of Humanity’s Assembly in the life to come. This will be the Day of Resurrection and Dispersal. The exact details of this Day are not mentioned here. This may be considered as part of the *ghayb*, which only Allah (ﷻ) knows with precision. Other *āyāt* speak about the Day of Judgement,

And [on that Day], the trumpet [of judgement] will be sounded, and all [creatures] that are in the heavens and all that are on earth will fall down senseless, unless they be such as Allah wills [to exempt]. And then it will sound again — and lo! standing [before the Seat of Judgement], they will begin to see [the truth]! (39:68).

On that Day even the hard-core deniers of Allah in this world will realize who the real authority is. They will see now who Allah is. They will understand that all power is His and that there is no one and no thing that stands in His way. With all the mercy and guidance that came their way from Allah, would that they had but acknowledged this truth when they were in this world, before coming to this Day of Truth.

“He knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind.” Allah’s (ﷻ) knowledge is infinite and overwhelming. But will man ever reach this consensus, that His knowledge of all things material or immaterial is final? **“For He alone is the Truly Wise, the All-Aware.”** He runs the physical and

material matter of existence; and He is the only One qualified to run the behavioral and social affairs of man. It is man's free will that will come to acknowledge this fact or to take issue with it. Man's history has been a tug of war between the ebb and flow to affirm or deny this fact. How many times have scholarly persons asked, "Could we have had only some information on such and such a subject; could we have some reference material on this social matter or the other; and could someone help us out with this moral or legal issue? Here it is. But will they respond?"

Man’s Compliance: the Crux of All Scriptural Missions

This integrated lesson captures the essence of *Sūrah al-An‘ām*: it sorts out the human from the divine and points to the relationship that binds man with Allah (ﷻ). This whole issue is cast, unlike its precursors, in a storytelling format, but none of its force and intent is diminished by this change of style.

- (6:74) And, lo, [thus] spoke Abraham to his family elder Āzar, “Do you take up *aṣnām* (human figureheads substituting for Allah) as gods? Verily, I see that you and your people have obviously gone astray!”
- (6:75) And thus We gave Abraham [his first] insight into [Allah’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth — and [this] to the end that he might become one of those who are inwardly sure.
- (6:76) Then, when the night overshadowed him with its darkness, he beheld a celestial object, [and] he exclaimed, “This is my Sustainer!” — but when it went down, he said, “I love not the things that go down.”
- (6:77) Then, when he beheld the Moon rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer!” — but when it went down, he said, “Indeed, if my Sustainer guide me not, I will most certainly become one of the people who go astray!”
- (6:78) Then, when he beheld the Sun rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer! This one is the greatest [of all]!” — but when it [too] went down, he exclaimed, “O my people! Behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity/authority, as you do, to any beside Allah!
- (6:79) “Behold, unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth have I turned my face, having turned away from all that is false; and I am not of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him.”
- (6:80) And his people argued with him. He said, “Do you argue with me about Allah, when it is He who has guided me? But I do not fear anything to which you ascribe

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ إِذْ أَرَّكَ
 وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ
 اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَأَحِبُّ الْأَفْلِينَ
 ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ
 يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ
 بَازِعَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُرْمُونَ مِنِّي
 بِمَمَّا تَشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ
 أَتُحِبُّونَنِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِي وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن
 يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ
 ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمُ
 بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ
 أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهَا

إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۚ نَزَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَأِهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ
 ﴿٨٣﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا
 مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ
 وَهَارُونَ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَرَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
 وَإِيلَاسَ ۚ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُوشَعَ
 وَلُوطًا ۚ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَمِن آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ
 وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَأَجْنِبَتِهِمْ وَهَدَيْنَهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ
 اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ ۚ مَن يَشَاءُ مِن عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحِطَٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ۚ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ
 بِهَا هُنَّآءَ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
 هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ فِيهِدُهُمْ أَقْتَدَهُ ۚ قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ إِن
 هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۚ إِذْ قَالُوا
 مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْءٍ ۚ قُلْ مَن أَنزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ
 مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ ۖ تَجْعَلُونَهُ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا
 وَعِلْمُهُمَّ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ وَلَا ءَابَاؤُكُمْ ۚ قُلِ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرَهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ

يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
 وَلِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ
 وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
 أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمْرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ
 أَخْرِجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا
 فِرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَزَّكْتُمْ مَّا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا
 نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَؤُا لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ
 بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

divinity/authority side by side with Him, [for no evil can befall me] unless my Sustainer so wills. All things does my Sustainer embrace within His knowledge; will you not, then, keep this in mind?

- (6:81) “And why should I fear anything that you comply with side by side with Him, seeing that you are not afraid of ascribing divinity/authority to other powers beside Allah without His ever having bestowed upon you from on high any warrant therefor? [Tell me], then, which of the two par-

ties has a better right to feel secure — if you happen to know [the answer]?

- (6:82) “Those who have made a secure commitment [to Allah], and who have not obscured their commitment by wrongdoing — it is they who shall be secure, since it is they who have found the right path!”
- (6:83) And this was Our argument that We vouchsafed to Abraham against his people: [for] We do raise by degrees whom We will. Verily, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.
- (6:84) And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; and We guided each of them as We had guided Noah aforetime. And out of his offspring, [We bestowed prophethood upon] David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron — for thus do We reward the doers of good;
- (6:85) And [upon] Zachariah, and John, and Jesus, and Elijah — every one of them was of the righteous;
- (6:86) And [upon] Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lot. And every one of them did We favor above other people;
- (6:87) And [We exalted likewise] some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren — We elected them [all], and guided them onto a straight way.
- (6:88) Such is Allah’s guidance: He guides therewith whomever He wills of His servants. And had they ascribed divinity/authority to any beside Him — in vain, indeed, would have been all [the good] they ever did;
- (6:89) [But] it was to them that We vouchsafed revelation, and sound judgement, and prophethood. And now, although these may deny it [revelation, sound judgement, and prophethood], We have entrusted it to people who do not deny it.
- (6:90) Those are the ones Allah has guided. Follow, then, their guidance, [and] say, “No reward do I ask of you for this [truth]: behold, it is but an admonition to all mankind!”
- (6:91) For, no true understanding of Allah have they when they say, “Never has Allah revealed anything to man.” Say, “Who has bestowed from on high the divine writ that Moses brought to men as a light and a guidance, [and] that

you treat as [mere] leaves of paper, making a show of them the while you conceal [so] much — although you have been taught [by it] what neither you nor your forefathers had ever known?” Say, “Allah [has revealed that divine writ]!” — and then leave them to thrash about concerning this matter.

- (6:92) And this, too, is a divine writ that We have bestowed from on high — blessed, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations] — and [this] in order that you may warn the foremost of all cities and all who dwell around it. And those who have a firm expectation of the life to come do affirm this [warning]; and it is they who are ever-mindful of their recourse [to Allah].
- (6:93) And who could be more wicked than he who invents a lie about Allah, or says, “This has been revealed to me,” the while nothing has been revealed to him; or he who says, “I, too, can bestow from on high the like of what Allah has bestowed”? If you could but see [how it will be] when these evildoers find themselves in the agonies of death, and the angels stretch forth their hands [and call], “Let go of yourselves [accept the inevitability of death]! Today you shall be requited with the suffering of humiliation for having attributed to Allah something that is not true, and for having persistently scorned His messages in your arrogance!”
- (6:94) [And Allah shall say], “And now, indeed, you have come unto Us in a lonely state, even as We created you in the first instance; and you have left behind all that We bestowed on you [in your lifetime]. And We do not see with you those intercessors of yours whom you supposed to have a share in Allah’s divinity/authority with regard to yourselves! Indeed, all the bonds between you [and your earthly life] are now severed, and all your former fancies have forsaken you!” (al-An‘ām:74–94).

The ancient and ongoing public debate about the meaning of divine authority and human compliance with it, which is at the center of all scriptural missions from Noah to Muhammad (ﷺ), is highlighted

in this suite of *āyāt*. One of human history's key protagonists to drive the thematic direction away from man's counterargument and into the domain of Allah (ﷻ) was Abraham. And so, the discourse here commences by calling attention to his virtue, intelligence, sagacity, and refined inborn pattern of behavior. Abraham's natural endowment was to search for his true lord, sustainer, and god. Observation followed by contemplation and reflection, occupying a good portion of Abraham's early life, was the pattern of his "search." His human nature was so "out of the ordinary" that it needed an answer to an improbable question, which would have been unthinkable by a society on the wrong track. Abraham (ﷺ) reasoned quickly that his familial elder, Āzar, could not be more wrong, and that his society was unfortunately following suit. His human nature was looking for its "connectedness" when all other connections appeared unsound and ill-founded. This drama between Abraham and his people is recounted in the following divine words,

And his people argued with him. He said, "Do you argue with me about Allah who has guided me? But I do not fear those [graven images] that you have correlated with Him, except if my Sustainer wills [such] a thing. My Sustainer accommodates the knowledge of everything. Do you not think back? How could I fear those you have affiliated [with Allah], while you do not fear [the consequences] of having correlated with Allah things He has not authorized you to do? Which, then, of the two sides is more deserving of security if only you knew?" (6:80–81).

The *āyāt* go on to show how insignificant society becomes when apostles and prophets stand for their God-given truth and principles. Societies in opposition to prophets and visionaries nonsensically babble on as they reject God's truth, which requires not only moral and principled prophets, but also ethical and scrupulous societies. This love and preference for the truth from Allah (ﷻ) brings together people from all walks of life, bypassing the typical di-

vision lines in the human race — ethnicity, nationalism, race, class, and gender. The words from Allah could not have been clearer,

That is Allah’s guidance by which He guides whomever He wills of His subjects; and if they were to correlate [others] with Allah they will certainly invalidate their own works. Those are the ones We presented with scripture, sound reasoning, and prophethood. And if these [those whom Allah presented with scripture] deny it then We entrust it to people who do not deny it. Those are the ones Allah has guided: follow, then, their guidance. Say, “I do not ask you compensation for this [guidance]. It is but a reminder for all the populations” (6:88–90).

Then the lesson turns on those who claim that Allah (ﷻ) did not send apostles and messengers, or maintain that He did not impart scripture to man. Their willful blindness makes them oblivious of who Allah is; they have badly miscalculated in their understanding of Allah, and so they show no appreciation for Him. No balanced mind can believe that God is going to leave man on his own, without guidance, without direction, and without vital and redeeming information. Man lives in a world of desires, lusts, vulnerabilities, and weakness — how can a compassionate god abandon him in such conditions. Man himself may disavow God, but Allah will not desert him, leaving him without counsel and instruction. This does not comport with His divinity, authority, and lordship. His knowledge, wisdom, justice, and mercy preclude such aloofness or distance from man. It is precisely because of Allah’s justice, knowledge, mercy, and understanding that He offers man the life-saving knowledge for recovery and salvation through the struggle of messengers and the scriptures imparted to some of them. The only workable dynamic is for human societies to be decisive about the straight way to God, and for them to resuscitate their God-given human nature from the adverse effects of materialism and the more advanced debilitating cases of hedonism. Two examples of this his-

torical fact are the scripture vouchsafed to Moses (ﷺ) as well as this Scripture (the Qur’an), which authenticates, endorses, and verifies the truth of all previous scriptures.

The lesson ends by disavowing those who lie about God and those who claim they are recipients of revelation from God, or those who contend they are also able to come up with scriptural material, *āyāt*, or revelation. In the course of history there were those who claimed they were prophets or recipients of Allah’s holy Writ. In the end, however, what shall happen is what Allah (ﷻ) had willed, and so it shall be with the final death scene of dejected *mushriks*,

And as you look on to oppressors in the throes of death with the angels’ hands stretched out [saying], “Come out [of your earthly lives]; today you will be compensated with humiliating hurt because of what you used to falsely attribute to Allah and because you were as arrogant as to dismiss His [power] manifestations. You have come to us unaccompanied, as We created you in the beginning and you have left behind what We made possible for you to realize. We do not see those intercessors that you affiliated [with Allah]. Your liaison has been severed and your fantasies have departed!” (6:93–94).

This view is glossed with mortification, colored with embarrassment, and accompanied by reprehension. These are the consequences of worldly pomposity, earthly disdain, social vanity, and false claims.

Abraham: the Original Seeker

The first striking thing to note in this marvelous rendering of human nature is how man has the capacity to go in search of Allah (ﷻ) when society itself has given up on Him or abandoned Him altogether. All the publicity and “logic” of an ungodly society cannot win over a heart, a psychology, and a soul that is in pursuit of Allah — He dwells in the moral sense of man,

And, lo, [thus] spoke Abraham to his family elder Āzar, “Do you espouse *aṣṇām* (human figureheads substituting for Allah) as [your] gods? Verily, I see that you and your folks have obviously gone astray!” And thus We gave Abraham [his first] insight into [Allah’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth — and [this] to the end that he might become one of those who are sure [to the core].

Then, when the night obscured him with its darkness, he beheld a celestial object, [and] he exclaimed, “This is my Sustainer!” — but when it went down, he said, “I love not the things that go down.” Then, when he saw the Moon rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer!” — but when it [too] went down, he said, “Indeed, if my Sustainer guide me not, I will most certainly become one of those who are off course!” Then, when he saw the Sun rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer! This one is the [most] massive [of them all]!” — but when it [too] went down, he exclaimed, “O my people! Behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity/authority, as you do, to any beside Allah! Behold, unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth have I turned my face, having turned away from all that is false; and I am not of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him” (6:74–79).

The problem is that in errant societies this fact of conscience does not find its way into the human mind and conscious

perception. This means that a searching person will have to tightly hold on to any clue that may lead to God. Some of these clues may prove elusive, some of them incorrect, as they do not “fit” into the inborn and intuitive human sense of Allah (ﷻ). But once there is a resonance between the elemental and inbred tendency to Allah with Allah Himself the moment of discovery becomes ecstatic and unforgettable. Abraham’s search illustrates this journey from erring society to the discovery of Allah in His glory and resplendence. All of these meanings are contained in the words of these few *āyāt*. This is the story of human nature as it moves from the colony of *bāṭil* (erroneous and false belief) to the dominion of *ḥaqq*. This requires a man of principle, a character honed by resolve and determination, and a champion of the truth. Nothing was going to stand in the way of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) as he searched for Allah — no elders, no family, no folks, and no fellowship or federation of tribes. Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) showed us the way, **“And, lo, [thus] spoke Ibrāhīm to his family elder Āzar, ‘Do you embrace idols as gods? I can see that you and your common people have obviously gone wrong!’”**

Ibrāhīm’s intuition told him that the people around him had it all wrong. He did not have concrete proof of his hunch or feeling, but his developing confidence, gained through his own reflection, convinced him that the “religious system” around him was untrue and inappropriate. His thoughtful tendency and common sense showed him that these idols, which were worshiped and revered by his society, cannot be gods. Ibrāhīm’s society was made up of the ancient Iraqis who idolized icons or sculptured images. In Ibrāhīm’s moral sense, these etched images could not be divine, a source of support and refuge for humans in need. And if these idols were unable to create, provide, hear, and respond — and this is obviously what one understands from the description of an idol — then they do not deserve any devotion or respect. These idols had no position between man and God; and this is what instinct and insight would have told Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) in such circumstances.

From the first instance, Ibrāhīm felt that the religious tenets of society around him were erroneous and baseless. On the strength of this internal feeling he took issue with the religious tra-

dition expressed by his elders. The truth he felt deep inside caused him to speak out and to speak up, **“Do you [Āzar] adapt idols as gods? I see that you and your people have manifestly strayed.”** Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), who is described in other *āyāt* as *tenderhearted, clement, and a person of keen morals and tolerance*, is found, here, to be decisive and deliberate. This is because the matter at stake has to do with a life-long relationship and commitment to the only One who deserves it. And when Allah (ﷻ) commands the loyalty of His subject the issue is final. There can be no distraction from family relations or bloodlines.

Ibrāhīm is the name of Khalīl al-Raḥmān (the Compassionate’s confidant).⁴⁷² He is acknowledged as the senior of the prophets after Noah (ﷺ). In some Judeo-Christian references Ibrāhīm is said to have come from Ūr.⁴⁷³ A few Arabic historical sources indicated that Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) hails from a village by the name of Kūthī in the general area of al-Kūfāh (Iraq). It is said that the name *Ibrāhīm* or *Abram* is a compound word. The first part is *Ib* or *Ab* meaning *father* in the Semitic language structure. And the second is *rahīm*, *raham*, or *ram*, which could mean either *ascendence* or *populace*. If it is the latter, then *Ibrāhīm* would literally mean *the father of the population* or *the father of the ummah*. This would imply that his name is predicting a profusion of people (sired through Ismā‘il and Ishāq – ﷺ) who will one day constitute the inhabitants of a vast territory or state. Whether the name *Ibrāhīm* begins with the letter *I* or *A* is a matter of the subtle fluctuations of vowels in the Semitic languages. Thus, the name *Ibrāhīm*, if composed of two words, is put together from the Semitic (Arabic) language (*Ab* or *Ib*) and the Chaldean language (*rahīm* or *raham*). Some linguists try to Arabize the word *Ibrāhīm*, saying that it has seven Arabic pronunciations: *Ibrāhīm*, *Ibrāhām*, *Ibrāhūm*, *Ibrāhim*, *Ibrāham*, *Ibrāhum*, and *Abraham*. Other linguists say that the name is Syriac. While yet others contend that *Ibrāhīm* is literally Arabic, meaning *sentimental father* (*Ab-raḥīm* or *Ab-rāḥīm*). By such reasoning the word becomes thoroughly Arabic, as the *ḥ* is guttural and unique to Arabic.

There may be a historical or archeological argument for the presence of the Arabic language in territories surrounding the Ara-

bian Peninsula, especially in what are today Iraq and Egypt. The books of hadith and Arabic history record that Ibrāhīm settled his Egyptian wife Hājar and his son Ismā'il (ﷺ) in the valley that is now known as Makkah. In that early history, a tribe by the name of Jurhum came along and populated the Makkan valley making it liveable for both Hājar and her son, Ismā'il. It is said that Ibrāhīm would visit his family there, and that when Ismā'il came of age, the two of them built the Holy Sanctuary (Baytullāh al-Muḥarram). Father and son (both prophets) were responsible for introducing Islam to Arabia. That ancient Arabic was known by Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) and his family there is a distinct possibility. Hājar herself may have been from a segment of the Egyptian population that either spoke ancient Arabic or was familiar with it. Thus when Ibrāhīm took her to Arabia she could conceivably communicate with the tribe of Jurhum, and its members could apparently understand her. These Arabic sources (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* among them) also indicate that Ismā'il (ﷺ) spoke even better than Jurhum.

The father/uncle of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), per this *āyah*, had the name *Āzar*. In the Book of Genesis the name of Abraham's father is Terah.⁴⁷⁴ Some Muslims would be surprised to know that even though this *āyah* is clear about the name of Ibrāhīm's father, there are many Islamic scholars who insist that his father's name was Terah or Terakh. No authentic hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) confirms this position, and no reliable Arabic sources state as much. It appears that this information made its way into Arabic Islamic sources via those individuals who became Muslims after converting from Judaism or Christianity, such as Wahb ibn Munabbih and Ka'b al-Aḥbār.⁴⁷⁵ These two, among others, are responsible for introducing inaccurate or inserting erroneous information into Islamic literature, even the literature of *tafsīr*. Al-Zajjāj and al-Farrā' are two of the Islamic historians and genealogists who were impacted by such incorrect information. This "information pollution" or outright fabrication, known as *isrā'īliyyāt*, has to be cleansed from our Islamic literature. Some early scholars such as Mujāhid, al-Suddī, citing one of two narratives attributed to 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās as recounted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Abū al-Shaykh, fell for these *isrā'īliyyāt*, as did Ibn Ju-

rayj. Al-Bukhārī in his *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* says that Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) is the son of Āzar, who in the Torah is called Terah.

As hard as it may be to believe, some Muslims cannot reconcile in their minds the fact that prophets may have fathers/uncles who are not Muslims. This somewhat “genetic” understanding of prophets does not sit well with the well-known history of prophets and their families. Every devout Muslim would like to say and believe that prophets and their ascending or descending family members are Muslims. But that is not the case. Our love of Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) cannot give a *carte blanche* to the misbehavior or delinquent behavior of some of their family members. Of course it is not easy to read this Book of facts and realize that the father of the “father of prophets” — Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) — was ungodly and unconverted to Allah. The following *āyah* will make it clear to those who harbor some doubt that Ibrāhīm’s father/elder was inimical to Allah (ﷻ),

But Ibrāhīm’s asking [Allah for] amnesty for his father/uncle was due to a promise that he [Ibrāhīm] had given the latter; but when he [Ibrāhīm] recognized that he [his father/elder] is an enemy of Allah, he [Ibrāhīm] absolved himself of him — [although] behold, Ibrāhīm was most tenderhearted, most clement (9:114).

Ibrāhīm’s position with regard to his father/uncle was a difficult one: a keen and caring son would want his father/elder to be saved. Hence, we sympathize with him when he says,

And forgive my father/family elder; he was with the strayers. And do not disgrace me when they are resurrected. On that day neither money nor children will be of any benefit — except for he who approaches Allah with a sound heart (26:86–89).

Ibrāhīm’s pristine clairvoyance tapped the divine will to open up new horizons for him,

And thus We gave Ibrāhīm [his first] insight into [Allah's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth — and [this] to the end that he might become one of those who are unequivocal (6:75).

In this part of the discourse, it seems that Ibrāhīm's determination shifts from rejecting the socio-religious disorder around him to examining the encompassing physical order. This pondering of the organized and coordinated physical world is what gave Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) his new visible horizon. Contemplating the substantial and tangible world put Ibrāhīm on the road to discover Allah (ﷻ). He, thus, perceived Allah in his self and in his good senses. There now was a congruence between his internal and emotional self and the external impellent reality. There was now a resonance between the outside world and the inside world.

This Abrahamic journey passed from an internal strong feeling and attachment to an external overwhelming consciousness and learning ability. Once the truth is ascertained, though, responsibilities begin. These responsibilities belonging to man cannot be left to the human mind alone. They have to be defined and refined by a higher authority — the only Divinity. In this way, man needs and then gets scripture, the sacred writings containing guidance from heaven. So consider now the various phases of Ibrāhīm's maturing experience,

Then, when the night obscured him with its darkness, he beheld a star [and] he exclaimed, "This is my Sustainer!" — but when it went down, he said, "I love not things that go down" (6:76).

There is a dynamic at work in this scene. Ibrāhīm's consciousness was engaged in a "search mode"; and the darkness (absence of light) fed into the search anxiousness within him. This may have had a "multiplier" effect upon Ibrāhīm (ﷺ). With all of his common sense he thought that the remote star out there with that glimmer of light may be the answer to his quest, **"Then, when the**

night hazed over him with its darkness, he saw a star; [and] he called out, **“This is my Sustainer!”**”

This is not the first time Ibrāhīm saw a shining star in the sky. But it was the first time, as it appears, he was looking for an answer he knew could not come from his society. And it was the first beam of light that carried a glow of an answer to the question on his mind, “Who is my Sustainer?” Thus came his initial answer, **“He said, ‘This is my Sustainer.’”** This star now had a relatively pertinent meaning: it had light, it was obvious, and it was exhilarating. Certainly, it qualified more than wood and stone to be a Sustainer. But, no, on further thought this could be — because the star set, **“But when it [the star] went down, he said, ‘I don’t like things that disappear.’”**

This star went away. It is not always available to people. Thus, someone else had to be in charge of it. An ultimate Lord and Sustainer cannot diminish and cannot be controlled by something or someone else, hence his words, **“I don’t like things that become invisible.”** This is the logic of intuition. The relationship between innate human nature and its Sustainer is one of attachment and love, the involvement has to do with the heart and its yearnings, not necessarily the senses. Thus, Ibrāhīm’s “state-of-being” was now corresponding with things that become unnoticeable.

Then, when he saw the Moon rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer!” — but when it went down, he said, “Indeed, if my Sustainer guides me not, I will most certainly become one of the people who go astray!” (6:77).

This is a recurrence of the above. And once again it is not as if Ibrāhīm had never seen the Moon before. He may not have given much thought to the fact that the society around him was worshipping this celestial body. This had more to do with his personal experience than with what people whom he dismissed altogether were believing or doing. The Moon appeared to be emanating more light. It was occupying a distinctly illuminating position in the night sky; and so, **“He said, ‘This is my Sustainer!’”** But then it,

too, disappeared. Though, as Ibrāhīm had already gathered through the undercurrents of his own internal reflection, the vigilant Sustainer does not disappear.

Here, Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) intimates he needs help from the Sustainer whom he feels deep within the very core of his being, in his acquisition and cognitive yearning. He feels and senses his need for his Lord whom he loves, but has not yet found. He feels he is lost and misplaced without His direction, **“He said, ‘If my Sustainer does not guide me, I will most certainly be of the people who have gone astray.’”** Now this line of logic runs its course when Ibrāhīm has another similar experience,

Then, when he beheld the Sun rising, he said, “This is my Sustainer! This one is the greatest [of all]!” — but then when it [too] went down, he exclaimed, “O my people! Behold, far be it from me to affiliate [anyone or anything], as you do, on par with divine authority” (6:78).

But, then, the Sun, as massive and as bright as it was, also disappeared. It is at this point of searching and seeking that Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) feels his way, he experiences a change, he encounters a spark, and then he sees the light. Ibrāhīm found Allah (ﷻ) in a world of consciousness that dwarfs the senses. At this point, his exploring and probing coincided with his acumen and intelligence — and at this confluence, Ibrāhīm realized his Sustainer. This was not a star that glitters, a moon that shines, or a sun that glows; Allah was not to be found in the spectrum of what the eye visualizes or what comes within the range of sensory faculties. Ibrāhīm encountered Allah in his acute sensitivity and feelings. He ascertained Allah in his mind and conscience. And then he began to pick up on the presence of Allah in reality and in the world around. Thereupon, finally, Allah was perceived by Ibrāhīm as the Creator of everything within the cast of the very senses that were incapable of perceiving him earlier.

Then and there Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) differentiated himself from the “religious system” of his family and friends, his society. He now

knew that their “divine superiors” were false and fabricated. He thus parted ways with their religious life of *shirk*. These people did not argue about the presence of God, they rather asserted other things and selves as being proto-lords, quasi-lords, or would-be lords. Ibrāhīm broke from all that and oriented himself toward a sustainer without contenders or collaborators,

He [Ibrāhīm] said, “My people! I am innocent of your *shirk*. I have oriented myself toward He who has cleaved the heavens and the earth, parting away from all falsehood, and I am not included among the *mushriks* (6:79).

In a society that has systematically and institutionally omitted the fact of God’s authority, only a rare breed can sense the magnitude of this travesty. Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) comes through with a consciousness that refused to be cowed by traditions, “norms,” or legality. His psychology was in a heightened state of alertness as pertains to the exclusive authority of Allah (ﷻ). *Consciousness* has several different meanings, including the state of being awake (in contrast to *unconscious*) and the state in which mental experiences are directly accessible and reportable (in contrast to *subconscious* or *preconscious*). The *unconscious* to some people is the collection of feelings, drives, memories, and emotional conflicts individuals are not aware of, but which influence their mental processes and behavior, such as dreams and slips of the tongue indicating true feelings. In contrast, the *subconscious* is used colloquially to describe memories about which an individual is only dimly aware, but which can be recalled if focused upon. To some observers there seems to be a continuity of consciousness, the so-called “stream of thought.” Cognitive psychologists have emphasized that consciousness may be restricted to certain levels of processing; for example, one may be conscious at a high level of what someone else has said, but not be aware (nor be capable of being aware) of the low-level processing details of the acoustic signal that conveyed the message. *Subliminal perception*, literally, is a perception below the threshold (of aware-

ness). Evidence for subliminal perception comes from laboratory experiments where the presence of a briefly presented stimulus, which an observer is unable to report, can influence the speed or accuracy of processing the subsequent stimuli. With this in mind, it could be said that Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) merged his mind into his extrasensory perception (ESP). This is a form of perception beyond and distinct from the known sensory processes (refer to the earlier discussion concerning the *ghayb* in the *tafsīr* of *āyāt* 6:50–55).

In the West, religious people have become interested in ESP because the Bible describes so many events in these categories: dreams, healings, moving from place to place, reports from those who have died, knowledge by one person of another's past, and premonitions of the future. There is an effort to recover these as religious phenomena for today.

Seeing the Light Made Abraham a Target

These *āyāt* are describing Ibrāhīm's resolve to break through all the material and sensory obstacles standing in the way of his deep and profound acknowledgment of Allah (ﷻ) through a realization of how true his human nature is and how false his social order is. He now, in his acknowledgment and affirmation of Allah, had gained the element of certainty and the confidence of being with Him. It could be said that Ibrāhīm's trans-sensory perception made Allah perceivable in his conscience and in his mind as well as in the existence all around him. At this point of actuality and certainty Ibrāhīm's society began to take issue with him. Had it not been for that particular element of certainty, his society would not have been interested in him at all. If God was a theory, an assumption, something hypothetical, or a deity without authority, his society as a whole would not have had any argument with Ibrāhīm (ﷺ). But the fact that Ibrāhīm was convinced of Allah's divine authority and what this means for human life turned the social order against him. But he showed how determined and resolute he could be in standing up to the social matrix around him,

And his people argued with him. He said [to them], “Do you argue with me concerning Allah, the while He has guided me. I am not afraid of the god-equivalents that you have adopted, lest there be an element therein decreed by my Sustainer; my Sustainer engulfs everything within His knowledge — will you not bear this in mind? And how am I to fear those [God-equivalents] that you have associated with Allah, while you do not fear that which you have equated with Allah without having any authority from on high to do so? Which of the two camps merit security, if you were to apply your knowledge? (6:80–81).

Human nature in the course of time may deviate. Societies themselves are clumps of deviant human nature when they digress from God. The digression over generations and centuries becomes the established norm. This was the case in Ibrāhīm’s society: their digression from God landed them in the prohibited area of honoring idols, worshiping celestial bodies, and in any other way demeaning the one true God. When Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) approached them with a frame of self and mind that asserts and trusts the One God, they, because of their well-established social deviation, were incapable of seeing how Ibrāhīm was right and they were wrong. Ibrāhīm’s discovery of a long-buried truth did not motivate the elders of his society to reconsider their errant practices and beliefs. The established order, the established religion, and the established “consensus” meant more to them than the truth coming from Ibrāhīm, and thus they were unable to change their minds on this issue. This attitude inevitably led them to confront Ibrāhīm with a plethora of arguments, even though they were on thin ice compared to Ibrāhīm’s facts and assertion. Ibrāhīm, who had Allah (ﷻ) in his heart and thoughts, stood up to them comfortably and confidently, **“Do you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me?”**

In effect, Ibrāhīm was incredulous at their contentiousness: how could they argue with him about Allah (ﷻ) who had touched

his heart, held his hand, guided his direction in life, and disclosed Himself to him? Ibrāhīm “saw” Allah in his conscience and experience, just as he saw Him in the world around. How could they argue about something he felt and ascertained in his own self and life without their physical criteria? Allah’s guidance was proof enough for Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), **“And I fear not those [false deities] that you have likened to Him.”**

How can anyone who has found Allah (ﷻ) feel afraid? Who is there to fear? What is there to fear? Every power other than Allah is too insignificant to fear, and every authority not belonging to Allah is too trivial to revere. There may be in the sensitive psychology of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) exceptions to the general rule, thus, **“Except that Allah decrees [such fear]; as my Sustainer encompasses everything with His knowledge.”** Fear is part of human nature. Ibrāhīm was a human being. After all, he alone had taken on his society with all their false images, false beliefs, and false traditions. If society were to react to him and threaten him, it is plausible that he could fear their terrors and the consequences. So he left those difficult moments in life, were they ever to come up, to the decree and will of Allah.

And why should I fear anything you comply with [as deities], side by side with Him, seeing that you are not afraid of ascribing divine authority to other powers beside Allah without His ever having bestowed upon you from on high any warrant therefor? [Tell me], then, which of the two parties has a better right to feel secure — if you happen to know [the answer]? (6:81).

This is the moment of departure: Ibrāhīm stands his firm ground of commitment to Allah (ﷻ) while his society stubbornly digs in on their shaky ground of devotion to lesser powers and false lords. To take on and oppose society — the way things are, as it were — has never been the easiest of tasks. This means that all the traditions, history, customs, institutions, status quo, and power structure of that society were in the wrong, and Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) was

in the right. How can Ibrāhīm, or anyone else in his position, fear false gods, fly-by-night idols, and futile paganism. The reverence in such societies usually shifts from the religious class to the political and power class. The truth of the matter is that there are individuals and mortals who become lords in such societies. Little do they know that a person with the strong and unshakeable conviction of Ibrāhīm can expose their pretenses and lies. How could any man of God fear deceitful deities and illusory idols? Rather it is the society with its idol loyalty that should fear its doings, and be terrorized of the consequences. People speak prolifically about security nowadays. In this comprehensive context of individual and society, Allah is telling man that those who dishonor Him and His authority are the ones who end up having no security. The social and physical world will destabilize their lives in more ways than one; and they will end up consumed with the fear that they themselves generated by departing from God.

“Those who are committed to Allah, and who have not obscured their commitment by wrongdoing — it is they who shall be secure, since it is they who have found the right path.” This *āyah* is alerting the reader to the theological and ideological standoff between Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) and his society. Commitment here, in the nature of this standoff, is vulnerable to wrongdoing. In this context, wrongdoing could mean compromise, negotiating away principle, playing down the differences, or blurring the lines. Regardless, any amount of this kind of undressing of *īmān* is tantamount to *ẓulm*. There can be no confusing of the key issue: Allah (ﷻ) is the authority; other lords and idols have no authority. On this pivotal element of commitment there can be no discussion intended to produce half-way solutions or mid-way accommodations. When the above *āyah* was revealed among that first generation of committed Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ), some of them were so sensitive to its meaning that they asked him, “But who is it that is not guilty of wrongdoing? Who of us has not wronged himself?” The Prophet replied, “*It is not as you suspect. It is rather as Luqmān stated to his son, ‘O my son: do not equate with Allah, as this equating is a grand ẓulm [wrongdoing].’*”⁴⁷⁶

“And this was Our reasoned assertion that We vouchsafed to Ibrāhīm against his people: [for] We do raise by degrees whom We will. Verily, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.” It appears that Ibrāhīm’s people did not take issue with God as creator and maker of the world; their fatal problem was that they “downgraded” God by stripping Him of His authority and upgraded human beings by allocating to them the authority that belongs to God. This has always been the deviation penchant of human societies, past or present. Rarely has man been confronted with societies that deny the existence of God altogether, or that God is Almighty and All-Powerful. The trouble with people is that they deviate into a religious belief that raises humans into authority positions and lowers God into a position void of authority. In this scenario those who are with Allah (ﷻ) in His authority right are impregnable while those who denigrate God are vulnerable and assailable.

The Muslims of today are going to have to learn by doing that this split with society sometimes is unavoidable. And when it happens these Muslims have to be confident that they have the upper hand in every sense of the word. And when they are in that position they have nothing to fear, while their opponents have everything to fear. And indeed, Allah (ﷻ) says so. What else could one want — or need?

“Truly, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.” This sentence preempts those demagogues who will try to throw in their “logically constructed tidbits” that go in the wrong direction. If anyone is looking for reliable information on such matters of authority, divinity, *shirk*, and *zulm*, they need look no further. The chart and pattern for such concepts are right here in this definitive Qur’an. It should be noted that throughout the Qur’anic discourse, many times, the words *shirk* and *zulm* are analogous.

God's Prophets Are the "Light Unto Nations"

The succeeding *āyāt* consolidate together a bloc of Prophets (ﷺ) — the ones who are related to Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) either through his offspring or through his character. This continuum of prophets and messengers, all of them doing essentially the same thing, tried its level best to direct multifarious peoples to accept Allah (ﷻ) as their Sustainer while simultaneously rejecting other men as their lords,

And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; and We guided each of them as We had guided Noah aforetime. And out of his offspring, [We bestowed prophethood upon] David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron: for thus do We reward the doers of good; and [upon] Zachariah, and John, and Jesus, and Elijah: every one of them was of the righteous; and [upon] Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lot. And every one of them did We favor above other people; and [We exalted likewise] some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren: We elected them [all], and guided them onto a straight way.

Such is Allah's guidance: He guides therewith whomever He wills of His servants. And had they ascribed divinity to any beside Him, in vain, indeed, would have been all [the good] that they ever did — [but] it was to them that We vouchsafed revelation, and sound judgement, and prophethood. And now, and although these may deny it [revelation, sound judgement, and prophethood] We have entrusted it to people who do not deny it. Those are the ones Allah has guided. Follow, then, their guidance, [and] say, "No reward do I ask of you for this [truth]: behold, it is but an admonition to all mankind!" (6:84–90).

Attention is directed to 17 prophets and messengers, in addition to Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), not to mention a reference to yet others, "...and [We exalted likewise] some of their forefathers

and their offspring and their brethren...” This prophetic league constitutes a force around which history should be written. In today’s secular world, officially recorded history concentrates on “superpowers,” “empires,” “wars,” and the like — a chronology of events and motivations written by the handpicked scribes of the “winners” and “victors” in their own words. Seldom has there been a rational narrative of history that reconstructs the past and then stages the present in light of the centrality of messengers and prophets from Allah (ﷻ). The unwritten facts of this historical and contemporary struggle are recorded here in this lasting Book. Allah’s truthful and factual words demonstrate that social and physical aspects of history are closely and inevitably related to this unremitting endeavor represented by prophets then, and by their followers now,

And it is in this manner that We compensate those who struggle for betterment (6:84);

And each [of these messengers] We have favored above the rest of the creations (6:86);

And We privileged and guided them [these messengers] to a straight track (6:87).

Alluding to these preferential personalities of humanity and history in this state of affairs introduces the facts to follow,

That is the guidance from Allah to which He guides whomever He chooses from [among] His subjects. And if they were to set up rivals [with Allah] they will find their labor failing them... (6:88).

The long script of history contains an important, albeit rarely recognized, element: the light and the way shown by Allah to societies is consummated through the service and deputation of His Prophets (ﷺ). Islam in motion — that is, the opposite of academic

or theoretical Islam — is secured through the service and struggle of real human beings, tangible members of society, and down-to-earth persons who eat and drink, labor and relax, and live and die. Such are those who are imbued with the ambition and aspiration of these divinely commissioned prophets. It is the indefatigable prophet, through his struggle and divine service, who sets the record straight for people around him, the people who understand or communicate with him, and the people belonging to his time and place. However, when this prophet's task of putting together a social order on God's terms is completed, if his people then choose to mar this effort by confronting Him, by forgetting Him, or by dishonoring Him — all of which is done more often than not by unauthorized Him, or by authorizing others in addition to or in exclusion of Him — then they devalue all their work and depreciate all their accomplishments. A society that works hard and aims high without acknowledging the authority of Allah (ﷻ) is bound to end up without benefits and results — in vain shall be its toil and pursuits. Such a society is akin to cattle that eats toxic waste. The end result is destruction and demise.

They [these prophets] are the ones to whom We have given scripture, wisdom, and prophethood. So if these [their own people] are in denial [of the truth] We will refer [scripture, wisdom, and prophethood] to [other] people who will not be in denial (6:89).

The first fact was stated: guidance comes from Allah (ﷻ). This would mean in the real world that theories and ideologies, programs and strategies that are developed by academics or philosophers, intellectuals or educators who do not draw on scripture, divine wisdom, and prophethood have nothing to offer for the purpose of direction or advice as to a decision or course of action for man, society, and the world. The Muslims lacking in self-confidence will, no doubt, find this hard to accept, but the selfless, more committed Muslims have a responsibility, in a humble way, to go public with the fact that only in scripture is there the light, salvation, and di-

rection man needs when he realizes that his self-made theories are getting him nowhere. Dusting off centuries of neglect, with the full confidence that comes from being with Allah (ﷻ), the Muslims have to be assertive, perhaps even aggressive, in regenerating the *hudá* associated with scripture and prophethood.

The Messengers (ﷺ) who are mentioned here spent a lifetime of blood, sweat, and tears to move people in the right direction, to win over societies to their Creator, and to put ignorance and arrogance in the rearview mirror. These messengers were the ones who were given scripture, wisdom, and prophethood, as well as authorization to show the rest of humanity the way to Allah (ﷻ). The word *ḥukm* in the *āyah* straddles the meanings of *wisdom* (*ḥikmah*) as well as *governance* (*ḥukūmah*). There is no reason to generate an argument here as to whether one meaning excludes or diminishes the other. Rather, the more enlightened understanding suggests that the word blends the two meanings together. Some of these messengers were vouchsafed scripture, such as Mūsá who was given the Torah; Dāwūd who was given the Zabūr (Psalms); and 'Īsá (ﷺ) who was given the Injīl (the Gospel). Allah gave others dominion or governance, as in the case of Dāwūd and Sulaymān (ﷺ).

All prophets had the prerequisites for governance and dominance through divinely ordained legal authority. They were meant to have influence over people and their affairs. Allah (ﷻ) commissioned messengers precisely because these were the people in society who could command respect and obedience. And similarly, Allah revealed scripture for the purpose of making it the standard for governance and administration. The standards of scripture and the struggle of prophets have become the paradigm and criterion for justice. All these messengers were bearers of wisdom and shouldered the weighty responsibilities of prophethood. Allah entrusted them with His *dīn*. They committed themselves to the integrity, preservation, and communication of this *dīn*. And when the aristocratic Arabians denied Allah's *dīn*, He placed it in the capable hands of people who were up to the task of implementing its directives.

This fact of life has not been an important subject in the mainstream educational programs of today, both secular and reli-

gious. But their refusal to acknowledge it has not precluded this fact from enduring, especially as it has been preserved in this Book of Records. Even if this fact has been limited to the conscientious determination of some individuals, and even if there are only a few people to move this process forward, it will continue to live on until such time that there will be a breakthrough and this *din* will once again flourish in its societal capacity or even in its global reach. This mission of the prophets will continue to work its way because it exists within the very core of human nature and across the expanse of human history,

Such is Allah's guidance: He guides therewith whomever He wills of His subjects... Those are the ones Allah has guided. Follow, then, their guidance [and] say, "No reward do I ask of you for this [truth]: behold, it is but a word of advice to all mankind" (6:88–90).

Human history is presented in terms of peoples' occupations and geographical locations. In today's view of the world, books have been written about the origins of early man and his habitat, the hunters and the gatherers insofar as the economy of early man was concerned, the Ice Age and man, and how the transition from hunting to farming led to the emergence of agriculture. Similarly, unaccountable numbers of pages and books have been devoted to the rural world and studies of the Near East from 8000–3000BCE, its early centers of population, and the Copper Belt (a region in Central Africa situated on the border region between northern Zambia and southern Congo). The history of early Europe, including the colonization of the continent from 6000–1500BCE and the Megalithic Monuments have been extensively covered; and so, too, with the parallel history of man in Africa, replete with studies of rainfall, vegetation, and native languages. The histories of the peoples and cultures of the Americas through 900CE have been composed and more are coming. There are even tracts about Australia and Oceania before the coming of the Europeans, the settlement of Polynesia and Melanesia, and the early New Zealand Settlement.

Hundreds of books speak about the first civilizations. With little to no input from God, people can go to their local libraries and read about the beginnings of civilizations in the Eurasian world (3500–1500BCE), the spread of such civilizations, and the development of writing. They can pick up a secular knowledge of the early empires of Mesopotamia (circa 3500–1600BCE), the principle Amorite kingdoms, and ethnic movements. Ancient Egypt figures prominently in the early history of the world: Egypt in pharaonic times, and Egypt's Nubian and Asiatic conquests. Plenty of information has been compiled about the invasions and migrations in the ancient world, especially in the Indo-European and Semitic contexts. Yet, in all these accounts speaking volumes about material man, there is a void concerning the central piece of human history found in this fact-filled Qur'an: scripture, wisdom, and prophethood. Even we, the Muslims, have not drafted a consistent historical narrative about the civilizations mentioned in the Qur'an.

This omitted part of essential history cannot be ignored for long, **“Behold, it is but a warning to all mankind.”** And this *warning to all mankind* is inclusive of all civilizations, empires, and kingdoms: Chinese, Indian, Eurasian classical, Hellenic, Persian, Northern European, Roman, Germanic and Slavonic, the Jewish Diaspora, Frankish, Vikings, Magyars, Byzantine, Medieval German, Mongol, *ad infinitum*.

The lesson from heaven moves on to disparage those who ignore scripture or exclude prophethood from their lives and societies, and from their minds and memories. Whether such types take the form of culture or civilization, they do not appreciate Allah (ﷻ) for they cannot “figure Him out” with their limited capacities, which they have an over-exaggerated sense of. They cannot rise to understanding God's wisdom, nor can they sense His mercy, much less His justice and impartiality. This final scripture (the Qur'an) is the internal representation and mental synthesis of all the preceding missions of prophets and dispensations from Allah; it constitutes the clinching story and abiding confirmation of all earlier scriptures,

For, no true understanding of Allah have they when they say, “Never has Allah revealed anything to man.” Say, “Who has bestowed from on high the divine writ Moses brought to men as a light and a guidance, [and] that you treat as [mere] leaves of paper, making a show of them the while you conceal [so] much — although you have been taught [by it] what neither you nor your ancestors had ever known?” Say, “Allah [has revealed that divine writ]!” — and then leave them to be entertained [and distracted] by their own talk of the town!

And this, too, is a divine writ that We have bestowed from on high — blessed, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations] — and [this] in order that you may warn the foremost of all cities and all who dwell around it. And those who are certain of the life to come do heed this [warning]; and it is they who are ever mindful of their [daily] recourse [to Allah] (6:91–92).

The *mushriks* in Arabia used to say that God did not send any prophet to mankind; thus He did not entrust any scripture to humanity. This line of thinking also characterizes the non-Arabian *mushriks*. When people do not want to listen to God, they refute the prophets and scriptures. But the history and impact of Moses (ﷺ) and the scripture he disseminated was so significant that they had to answer to it. The Arabians were aware of this; so how did they respond? Islamic historical sources say that before Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an, the Arabians did not dispute the Torah; nor did they question the validity of Jews as people of scripture. But now that an Arab prophet was amongst these very Arabians — from their own selves, their own culture, and their own society — they began to dispute scripture and debate its bearer, “**For, no true assessment of Allah have they when they say, ‘Never has God revealed anything to man.’**”

This attitude and its verbal expression are not new. There have always been and will always be people who try to disprove the

facts about scripture, revelation, and prophethood. Some would say “religion is man-made.” They insist it is like all other things: it too evolved and developed. Their arguments make no distinction between ancient and current pagan religions that are in fact the product of man’s incoherent thinking, and the genuine *dīn* that has always sprung from divinity with its one eternal message: man has to conform to the One God, man has to comply with his Maker, and man has to honor none other than Allah (ﷻ) as authority.

Today’s polished case against *dīn* easily (and suspiciously) substitutes the word *religion* for the Qur’anic word *dīn*. Such an approach has been conceived with a view to ultimately refuting scripture and rebutting prophethood. The quest for the origin of religion was a popular academic enterprise at the beginning of the 20th century and is to be seen in the works of the economist and historian Karl Marx, the sociologist Emile Durkheim, and the psychologist Sigmund Freud. This arduous search is predicated upon some kind of an answer to the “meaning of religion; that is, if the origin of religion can be determined, then it may be possible to ascertain its meaning. Thus, for Freud, in the beginning was “the deed” — religion grew out of experiences surrounding certain primal actions. For Durkheim it was the appearance of the “collective conscience,” as society itself was deified in symbolic, totemic form. For the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor the origin of religion was to be found in the first human attempts to explain experience. For other scholars mysticism was the origin, indeed the very essence, of religion.⁴⁷⁷

Two counterarguments seek to put an end to the quest for origins. The first contends, on the basis that the quest is sheer conjecture, that none of these claims can ever hope to be proven. The second asserts, on linguistic grounds, that the meaning of religion, like the meaning of language, cannot be explained by a study of its history or origin, even if the two could be discovered. That is, to know the meaning of English is to know something other than its history or origin. Nevertheless, in the late-20th century, conjectures concerning origin once again came to the fore in the study of religion, as they did in linguistics.⁴⁷⁸

Such speculation and guesswork about God, scripture, and prophets come from a psychology that refuses to listen to God. When such a psychology is socialized through the various educational institutions and political mechanisms of society, individuals, be they intellectuals or laymen, are “manufactured” to have no good thought or idea about God. Therefore, they cannot take account of Him and recognize Him with gratitude. Some of them may surface periodically with the retort that if God were to send someone it would have been an angel. This is what the Arabians thought when the Prophet (ﷺ) presented the final scripture to them. They also implied that God in His glory and majesty would not “stoop down” to be concerned with the particular affairs of a finite human in this vast and expanding universe. To them, God is above sending prophets and revealing scriptures to uplift this trivial human being on a planet that is insignificant in this astronomical expanse.

The more advanced perverted psychology takes this a step further, denying the existence of God altogether. The materialists and atheists openly declare that this notion of God, prophets, and scriptures is just another illusion or deception under the rubric of religion. The existence and affirmation of God is the view that all limited or finite things, though fully real in their own right, are dependent in some way upon, yet distinct from, one supreme or ultimate being, of which one may also speak in personal terms. This being is regarded as beyond human comprehension, perfect, and self-sustained but also peculiarly involved in the world and its events, both minor and major.⁴⁷⁹

Those who affirm God characteristically seek support for their contentions in rational argument and appeal to experience. In the history of Western thought, this has given rise to several types of arguments for the existence of God. The four primary ones are the cosmological, teleological, ontological, and moral. Frequently these arguments are propounded in combination. Cosmological arguments begin with recognition of particular features of the world, or of the fact of its existence, and then infer God as the ultimate cause. The world is seen as dependent upon some being beyond it for its intelligibility and existence. The classic statement of the cosmological

argument in the Western world was given by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* (Part 1, Question 2, Article 3).⁴⁸⁰

The teleological argument proceeds from an observation of the functional order of the universe whereby things in the world function toward ends or goals. One version of this argument is, strictly speaking, a form of cosmological argument since it depends upon a notion of final causality, holding that purposeful actions must be ultimately designed or directed by an intelligent purposive being. This argument received its clearest expression in the West in David Hume's critical analysis of the argument from design, in which the universe is seen as an orderly machine.⁴⁸¹

The ontological argument attempts to show that the concept of God implies the necessity of God's existence. The classic statement of this argument is found in St. Anselm of Canterbury's *Proslogion*, which defines God as "that greater than which nothing can be conceived." One form of this argument is based on the claim that existence is a perfection among others and that, since God embraces all perfections, God must exist. Another form of ontological argument asserts that God can only be conceived as a necessary being and therefore cannot be conceived as nonexistent or merely possible.⁴⁸²

The moral argument, which rests upon the experience of obligation or moral duty, was developed by Immanuel Kant, who argued that, in order for morality to be rationally justified and hold an influence over human actions, it must be assumed that obedience to obligation will coincide with happiness. Thus, God must be postulated as the being who rewards worthiness and enables moral life to be rationally understood.⁴⁸³

The affirmation of God views divinity as somehow daringly related to the world. This has generally been expressed in some analogy of God to a personal being in the West. This has also tended to affirm both the immanence (permanently pervading and sustaining the universe) and the transcendence (existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe) of this ultimate being. Other attributes of God, such as infinity, eternity, omniscience, and omnipotence, are treated by theists in ac-

cordance with analogies drawn from human experience. A major problem is to understand how finite and imperfect characteristics can be understood as existing perfectly in God. Another central issue is that of reconciling the claims that God is both omnipotent and perfect with the existence of evil in the world.⁴⁸⁴

It is generally agreed that no theistic argument proves the existence of God in any strict physical sense. All depend upon certain disputable presuppositions. Such “proofs” are generally seen as means of examining the logical correlates of belief or disbelief. Theists have encountered criticism from those who deny the capacity of reason beyond ordinary experience, those who reject the role of reason in favor of revelation alone, and those who accept the rational method but reject the theistic conclusions.⁴⁸⁵

Say, “Who has bestowed from on high the divine writ that Moses brought to men as a light and a guidance, [and] that you treat as [mere] leaves of paper, making a show of them the while you conceal [so] much — although you have been taught [by it] what neither you nor your predecessors had ever known?” (6:91).

This *āyah*, reiterating the fact that it belongs to the Madinan era of revelation, speaks to the *mushriks* about the Yahūd. It describes how these Yahūd reduced the valuable information of scripture to just words on paper. Further, the Yahūd would “adjust” scriptural words to suit their scheming. They would present the public with cherry-picked words or verses from scripture that outwardly threw divine weight behind their calculating and conniving, in the process skewing injunctions and slanting promulgations. Concealing scriptural meanings that did not comport with their clever distortions was not beyond them. The Arabians, no doubt, already had some experience with Yahūdī social behavior, but now the incontrovertible Qur’an was placing the letter-perfect facts in front of them.

The Qur’an cannot be confined to a particular time or place, hence the progressive question that was valid then still stands, “Then say [to them, O Muhammad], ‘Who is it that revealed the

Book to Moses as a source of light and guidance to people?’”

Why do the Yahūd scale down the thrust of this divine Book by concealing some of its meanings and by amplifying others for their own selfish and clannish objectives? Of course, in our time today as in those ancient times, there are layers and walls of information presenting the Yahūd in a positive, humane, and decent light. But this Qur’an penetrates the prevarications and fabrications of the Yahūd to tell humanity the truth about this acrid human social behavior. Needing to face reality, either the Muslims will fall for the media talking-points about the Yahūd and assume they are clear of blame, or they will learn from this Qur’an about the real Yahūdī social self and self-centered priorities that border on criminal narcissism. If the Muslims choose to learn from Allah (ﷻ), history, and experience — as they should — then they should be thankful that they are not left to the media and its theater, all combining to deviate from or pervert the truth. This appropriate and well-timed information came to the Prophet (ﷺ), and by extension through him, to the committed Muslims of today.

The answer to the enduring question above is not left up to prevaricating persons or counter-factual characters. The Prophet (ﷺ) is enjoined to proclaim the words that many “active” Muslims today are afraid to utter. This issue does not brook argumentation and gainsay, **“Say, ‘Allah [has revealed that truth in divine writ]!’ — and then abandon them to their pastime talkathon...”**

One of the problems today’s confidence-challenged Muslims suffer from is that they think they cannot feel complete unless they thoroughly endear themselves to the Yahūd and the Naṣārā (Jews and Christians of Zionist and imperialist convictions). The deficit of conviction in their thoughts coupled with their inability to connect circumstance to divine guidance precludes them from stating the truth to the public so as to put Zionist Jews and imperialist Christians on notice as they go into their talkfest. They will, from what is obvious day after day and year after year, argue an issue to death when they disagree with committed Muslims. They will exclude the Muslims from such sessions, and skirt the truth while dressing themselves up with half-truths and pseudo-religious doc-

trines. Self-assured Muslims should let these pompous blowhards run their voices hoarse as they rant and rave against this truth from heaven. Muslims who are “Allah’s work on earth” should never undervalue the precious truth that is in their possession by subjecting it to the diabolic verbal “give and take” of merciless Zionists and criminal imperialists.

The Blessed Qur’an That Was Revealed in Makkah

The lesson concludes by focusing attention on this new divine Writ that some people deny. They say that Allah (ﷻ) did not reveal such a Book. They fail to see how the Qur’an is not only the final scripture, but the final word on scripture. It was an honor for the Prophet (ﷺ) to have been tasked by Allah to publicize and deliver the contents of this open Book,

And this, too, is a divine writ that We have bestowed from on high — blessed, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations] — and [this] in order that you may warn of the foremost of all cities and all who dwell around it. And those who have a firm expectation of the life to come do affirm this [warning]; and it is they who are ever-mindful of their orderly recourse [to Allah] (6:92).

Allah (ﷻ) sends messengers. And with them He reveals scriptures. And if that had been the case with Moses and Jesus, then why can it not be the case with Muhammad (ﷺ)? Per the words of Allah Himself, this divine Writ, the Qur’an, is blessed — in every sense of the word. It is blessed as it is sacred and morally binding. It is blessed because it is a state of serenity and felicitous well-being. It was blessed as it was being revealed. It is blessed in its geographical beginning and psychological stirring. It is blessed to have been imprinted, as it were, on the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ) of dignity. It is blessed in its size and subject. Though it is not an encyclopedia in size, it is more than an encyclopedia in meanings and

inspiration. A few *āyāt* from this Qur'an are weightier than hundreds of books in their implication and content-worth. There are those who have spent a lifetime with words and meanings, who have acquired a level of natural fluency that artfully translates thought into expression; when such accomplished masters approach the Arabic Qur'an with a will to read and understand it without bias or predisposition, they do not need to be convinced that each word is carefully selected, and that each *āyah* delivers layers of meanings. Each lesson is packed with information, experience, insight, and knowledge that is either new or renewable, and that is made to fit the human intellect in its varying capacities. One *āyah* encompasses linguistic standards, verbal excellence, contingent information, and facts that are of the highest order and at the cutting edge of knowledge and "scholastics." In the wording, phraseology, and diction of the Qur'an, there is an "authority" and commanding presence that cannot be found in any other book. The more contact there is with this blessed Book the more the grace and benediction, **"Confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier scriptures]."**

The fundamentals and foundations of Allah's message to humanity are found here in this unaltered Qur'an. It confirms and corroborates all the information that was originally in the Torah (the five books of Moses) and the Injil (the Gospel). It is said that the Torah and the Gospel did not survive in the generations that followed Moses and Jesus (ﷺ). Neither the spoken word of Moses, nor of Jesus was registered or written in its original language at the time it was uttered. From generation to generation and from language to language those revealed scriptures succumbed to a process of alteration and revision. Not so, however, with this exact Qur'an. The word of Allah (ﷻ) as pronounced by the Prophet (ﷺ) is still in its original form — accurately, precisely, and completely.

Committed Muslims periodically encounter a typically misrepresented issue. Some academics and intellectuals say that Islam is the entire and comprehensive expression of monotheism. In a sense, it is the advanced and progressive expression of previous monotheistic religions. Even though this line of thought seems ap-

pealing, it is somewhat misleading. The fact of the matter, as understood from the Qur'an and Sunnah, is that Islam is not the perfect expression of Judaism and Christianity — even though there is some truth in that statement — but more to the point, Islam is the unadulterated expression of Judaism and Christianity.

The reason for revelation and communication (scripture and prophet) was to foster the growth of Islam from Makkah, the people of Arabia, and adjacent areas to the world at large and into all walks of life, **“And for you [O Muhammad] to warn the founding society [Makkah] and all who dwell around it.”** Makkah is also known as Umm al-Qurá (literally, *the mother of urban centers*, but what the term really means is that Makkah is a model for transitioning from an undeveloped lifestyle to civil society), because within it lies the “House of Allah” (*baytullāh*). This was the first house that was dedicated to people,

Behold, the first Temple ever founded for mankind was indeed the one at Bakkah [alternative name for Makkah]: rich in blessing, and a [source of] guidance to all the worlds, full of clear *āyāt*.” [It is] the place whereon Ibrāhīm once stood; and whoever enters it finds security. Hence, pilgrimage to the Temple is a duty due to Allah by all people who are able to embark upon it. And as for those who deny Allah, verily Allah does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds (3:95–97).

It was meant for people to go there and express their devotion and attachment to Allah (ﷻ) — without any *sharik* (associate or derivative). Makkah was intended to be a *mathābah* (refuge and retreat) for people and other living beings without exception,

And lo! We designated the Sacred House a retreat for people and a sanctuary; take, then, Ibrāhīm’s seat of status as your shrine. And thus did We entrust Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘il to purify My Sacred House for the people

who will walk around it, [its] devotees, and those who genuflect and prostrate (2:125).

Out of Makkah came this Islamic call for all the peoples of the world and all the inhabitants of the planet. This Qur’an and Prophet (ﷺ) “internationalized” or “globalized” Makkah. Those who enlist themselves into this wave of Islam and *imān* journey to Makkah as a matter of Hajj and ‘Umrah. The trek in and out of Makkah has been designed, among other things, to bring Makkah to the world and to bring the world to Makkah — without restrictions, legal barriers, discrimination, and a Saudi Arabian “big brother” acting as a sentry for Zionism and imperialism.

Some orientalists selectively take this *āyah* out of context, using it to contend that the mission of Muhammad (ﷺ) was not universal but limited to Makkah and the people around it. This is what happens when intellectuals from outside of Islam read the Qur’an with their prejudice and hidden agendas. Had they approached this Qur’an with open minds and objective thinking they would have realized that Makkah was the stepping stone into the greater world for this message of Allah (ﷻ) that is meant for everyone, regardless of distance or distinction. Do they not read other *āyāt* in the Qur’an such as,

And We have not sent you [Muhammad] except as a mercy to all mankind (21:107);

And We did not send you [O Muhammad] except as a herald and warner to all and sundry (34:28).

The physical torture that was meant to smother the Prophet (ﷺ) and Islam in the first Makkan years has its echo in the orientalists who want to fold back Islam into the alleys and back streets of Makkah today.

“And those who have a firm expectation of the life to come do affirm this [warning Qur’an]; and it is they who are mindful of their methodical recourse [to Allah].” Those who are convinced

of the hereafter, accountability, and compensation for worldly deeds are also convinced that Allah (ﷻ) did send prophets and messengers who received revelation and enlightened disclosure. This conviction neither taxes their psychology nor strains their thoughts. Without reservation, they respond to this call from heaven. The certainty of the inevitable reckoning makes them organized and disciplined in their daily devotion to Allah (ﷻ). And it is this day-to-day relationship that is enforced by its public and systemic feature. Hence, an urban center, a civic *ṣalāh*, and a central Makkah that is in compliance with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Qur'an is a catalyst for the depth that is required for preparations for the Final Judgement.

The last two *āyāt* of this lesson portend a woeful and deplorable fate for the people who are occupied by evil and who spend their life doing wrong. These are the ones who “put words into the scripture of God.” They may even claim their theories and ideologies to be as good as scripture and guidance from heaven. They may even assert that what they have to say is more important than the Qur'an, or more important than what God has to say. Allah (ﷻ) provides a window into the future as His *āyāt* describe the throes of death experienced by these wrongdoers and evil-makers who had gone overboard in worldly life with their aggressive ideas and imposed ideologies. At this perilous moment, angels extend their hands to grab and cast them into the suffering they set up for themselves by their worldly adventures and exploits. As these angels hone in on their souls, the *ẓālimūn* (evildoers) can sense the dejection that is on the other side of life. At this point, they will have no option but to leave everything behind, and their associates, comrades, and partners will not be able to help them,

And who could be more wicked than he who invents a lie about Allah, or says, “This has been revealed to me,” the while nothing has been revealed to him; or he who says, “I, too, can bestow from on high the like of what Allah has bestowed”? If you could but see [how it will be] when these evil-mongers find themselves in

the agonies of death, and the angels stretch forth their hands [and call], “Let go of yourselves [accept the inevitability of death]! Today you shall be requited with the suffering of humiliation for having attributed to Allah something that is not true, and for having persistently scorned His messages in your arrogance!”

[And Allah shall say], “And now, indeed, you have come unto Us in a solitary state, even as We created you in the first instance; and you have left behind all that We bestowed on you [in your lifetime]. And We do not see with you those intercessors of yours whom you supposed to have a share in Allah’s divinity with regard to yourself! Indeed, all the bonds between you [and your material life] are now severed, and all your former fancies have forsaken you!” (6:93–94).

In accounts by Qatādaḥ and ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, these *āyāt* were revealed to primand Musaylamaḥ al-Kadhḥāb, his wife Sajāḥ bint al-Ḥārith, and al-Aswad al-‘Ansī.⁴⁸⁶ Near the end of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) life, these individuals claimed to have received revelation from Allah or to be prophets themselves. According to another narrative by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, the person who said **“This has been revealed to me”** or **“I, too, can bestow from on high the like of what Allah has bestowed,”** was ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ. He had become a Muslim and was even one of the scribes of the *wahy* (revelation). The narrative goes on to relate that when the *āyah* in *Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn*, **“And We created man from a chain-extraction out of soil...”** (23:12), was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) called upon Ibn Abī Sarḥ and told him to write it down. Then, when the Prophet reached the *āyah*, **“...and then We developed him into another creation...”** (23:14), Ibn Abī Sarḥ became astonished by the sequential description of creation (23:12–14), so he exclaimed, **“Exalted is Allah, the best of creators”** (23:14). The Prophet proceeded to say, *“And that [Ibn Abī Sarḥ’s wording] is what was revealed to me.”* Hearing this, Ibn Abī Sarḥ began to doubt revelation, saying, “If Muhammad is telling the truth, then I, too, am

receiving revelation. And if he is lying, I just said what he himself is saying.” Consequently Ibn Abī Sarḥ renounced Islam, that is, he became a *murtadd* and joined the *mushriks*.⁴⁸⁷

The Qur’anic scene depicting these liars is depressing, frightening, and nauseous, as they experience the horrifying moments of death. The word *ghamarāt* infers that they are overwhelmed, overtaken, and overpowered by these departing minutes at the end of life. As the *ẓālimūn* transition into the domain of accountability, the angels stretch out their hands and command the former to surrender their lives and part with the sensual world so that they can be chaperoned into a painful torment. Anguish and despondency fill the air,

If you could but see [how it will be] when these workers of evil and injustice find themselves in the agonies of death, and the angels extend forth their hands [and call], “Let go of yourselves [accept the inevitability of death]! Today you shall be repaid with the suffering of humiliation for having attributed to Allah something that is not true, and for having persistently scorned His messages in your arrogance!” (6:93).

Social oppression and psychological arrogance seem to be common traits of *shirk*, when individuals, elites, classes of people, and the power-mongers try to strip God of His authority, or in a roundabout way try to gain an allocation of His authority. One cannot lie about God in this life and then get away with it. The lie stops at the moment of death. The state of deep despair takes over when the truth becomes palpable and nothing can be done to obfuscate it. These people will proceed to what they deserve for their ungodly works on earth. The establishmentarian order, the power structure, and the financial institutions that shielded them in this materialistic world will be null and void. They will have to stand on their own merits or demerits, **“And now, indeed, you have come to Us in a lonesome manner, as We created you [before you attached yourselves to your financial and military structures].”**

At this crucial moment in time, they will experience the epitome of their egotistical narcissism: the stripped self — alone, unaccompanied, and apart from others. They will meet their Sustainer without the companionship and the advocacy of others. No company, no elites, no class, no “old boys,” and no family will come to their aid when they appear before their Sustainer. When they came into life they were alone and when they depart life they will do so alone. They cried out loud coming into life but they will not be heard as they are going out.

At this life-into-death moment of transfer, even those closest to them will not be able to provide any assistance. It is a time when no one will be around, even though hundreds of people may be present. No powerful earthly figure will be able to interfere in this moment of truth. All possessions will be bankrupt and all powers disabled. **“And you have left behind all that We lent you [in the material world].”** When the angels will be sending them off from this life into the afterlife, they will be taking no provisions: money, children, merriment, status, or influence. All these will be staying behind; they will leave empty-handed.

“And We do not see with you those intercessors of yours whom you assumed to have a share in Allah’s divinity with regard to yourselves!” They had it made in the material and impermanent world. They had worked out a religious and civic system of arbiters, people who would willingly interpose themselves on their behalf, and others (mediators and negotiators) who would intervene for their benefit. This whole system of religious mediation and civil intercession will no longer be able to exonerate them. Whether men of the cloth or men in uniform, none of them will have any power to come to their rescue. Whatever or wherever they may have been — in the church or in the citadel, in the temple or in the castle, in the court or in the cathedral — none will be able to move a molecule for them. Of what avail are those “assets” that were so useful in the day-to-day world of interests and graft?

“In truth, all the bonds between you [and your earthly connections] are now severed...” Those people who were ensconced in their worldly and comfortable connections, be they formal or-

ganizations of people, be they consorting with influential others, or be they social and business relationships, will not be relying on whatever worked for them in the temporal life, for all of those associations will be broken. No country-club membership, no alliance of collusion, no monopoly, no corporate subsidy, and no tax breaks for the rich, are going “to cut it” or “carry any weight” on that Day of Decision. All of that will be a thing of the past.

“And all your former fancies have forsaken you.” In the new reality, the lasting reality these *ẓālimūn* will now be entering, the past world will amount to little more than passing imagery. That it was all just a playful fantasy will now be revealed. Earthly life with all its wishful thinking, high expectations, and material ambitions will have no bearing on the impulse and the structure of the truth that will now be the only consideration. Even their claims and propaganda, which all seemed so real when they were “high and mighty,” will now fade into distant memory. If they were chiefs and superiors who used to rank “way up there” with their authoritarian style and their omnipresent influence, then their temporal “authority” will be shown to be the crumbling fake that it is in the face of the One Authority whom they should have revered when they had the opportunity to do so. These “big shots” in the earthly world of convenience and liaison will be in no position to help anyone, nor will anyone have the capacity to intercede on their behalf. Their influence will be nil. This scene is capable of arousing deep emotion, as only the Qur’an can do.

Life, Existence, and Order Come from God

The magnificence of this *sūrah* cannot be overstated. Its themes overflow into its major current. This is all done in a way that mesmerizes human attention and captivates man’s mind; each stream of meaning feeds into a larger substance of significance. In other words, these Qur’anic contents come at man in waves, the same way an ocean or sea moves its waves toward shore. For those fortunate enough to have developed the ability to “communicate” with the Qur’an, they can sense how inexhaustible its intended messages and expressed meanings are. These disclosures are delivered with vitality, profound impressions, almost musical notes, and with the bracing imagery that leaves its mark on anyone who wants to “tune in.”

When one is exceedingly charmed by the beauty of meaning and expression in the Qur’an, he cannot but wish this feeling of appreciation and ecstasy for all those who are not yet direct recipients of the artistic and graceful *āyāt* of this *sūrah*, which is now enriching our God-given minds and emotions. The day when all people are able to interrelate with this unpretentious and uplifting Qur’an will be an auspicious one.

- (6:95) Verily, Allah is the one who cleaves the grain and the fruit kernel asunder, bringing forth the living out of that which is dead, and He is the one who brings forth the dead out of that which is alive. This, then, is Allah: and yet, how perverted are your minds!
- (6:96) [He is] the One who causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night to be [a source of] stillness, and the Sun and the Moon to run their appointed courses: [all] this is laid down by the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.
- (6:97) And He it is who has set up for you the stars so that you might be guided by them in the midst of the deep darkness of land and sea: clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages to people of [profound] knowledge!
- (6:98) And He it is who has brought you [all] into being out of one living entity, and [has appointed for each of you]

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى ۗ يُخْرِجُ الْحَى مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَى ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ فَآنَىٰ تَوْفَكُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا
 وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي
 جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
 فَمَسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ ۗ قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَهُوَ
 الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا
 مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا
 قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ
 مُتَشَبِهٍ ۗ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
 يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ
 وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ بَدِيعُ
 السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَيْسَ بِكَوَافِرٍ لَّهُ وَلَدٌ ۗ وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ
 كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
 هُوَ ۗ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

١٠٢ لَا تَدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَرَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ
 الْخَبِيرُ ١٠٣ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ
 عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ١٠٤ وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ
 الْآيَاتِ وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ١٠٥ أَنْبِئْ مَا
 أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ١٠٦
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 بِوَكِيلٍ ١٠٧ وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ
 عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ
 فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ١٠٨ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ
 جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ
 أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ١٠٩ وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْعَادِيَهُمْ وَأَبْصُرُهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ
 يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ١١٠ وَلَوْ أَنَّا
 نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَكِيَّةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا
 كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ ١١١
 وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي

بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
 فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَقْتُرُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلِنَصِّغَنَّ إِلَيْهِ أَفْعَدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
 بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

a time limit [on earth] and a resting place [after death]: clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages to people who can grasp the truth!

- (6:99) And He it is who has caused waters to come down from the sky; and by this means have We brought forth all living growth, and out of this have We brought forth verdure. Out of this do We bring forth close-growing grain; and out of the spathe of the palm tree, dates in thick clusters; and gardens of vines, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate: [all] so alike, and yet so different! Behold their fruit when it comes to fruition and ripens! Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who will commit themselves [to Allah]!
- (6:100) And yet, some [people] have come to attribute to all manner of invisible beings a place side by side with Allah — although it is He who has created them [all]; and in their ignorance they have invented for Him sons and daughters! Limitless is He in His glory, and sublimely exalted above anything that men may devise by way of definition:
- (6:101) The Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could it be that He should have a child without there ever having been a mate for Him — since it is He who has created everything, and He alone knows everything?
- (6:102) Such is Allah, your Sustainer: there is no deity save Him, the Creator of everything: comply, then, with Him alone — for it is He who has everything in His care.

- (6:103) No human vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all human vision: for He alone is the Unfathomable, the All-Aware.
- (6:104) Means of insight have now come to you from your Sustainer [through this divine Writ]. Whoever, therefore, chooses to see, does so for his own good; and whoever chooses to remain blind, does so to his own detriment. And [say to the blind of heart], “I am not your keeper.”
- (6:105) And thus do We give many facets to Our messages. And to the end that they might say, “You have taken [all this] well to heart,” and that We might make it clear to people of [deep] knowledge.
- (6:106) Follow you what has been revealed to you by your Sustainer — save whom there is no deity — and turn away from all who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him.
- (6:107) Yet if Allah had so willed, they would not have ascribed divinity/authority to any beside Him; hence, We have not made you their keeper, and neither are you responsible for their conduct.
- (6:108) But do not revile those [beings] whom they invoke instead of Allah, lest they revile Allah out of spite, and in ignorance: for, goodly indeed have We made their own doings appear to every community. In time, [however], unto their Sustainer they must return: and then He will make them [truly] understand all that they were doing.
- (6:109) Now they swear by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle were shown to them, they would indeed commit to this [divine Writ]. Say, “Miracles are in the power of Allah alone.” And for all you know, even if one should be shown to them, they would not believe;
- (6:110) So long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned [away from the truth], even as they did not commit to it in the first instance, and [so] We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro.
- (6:111) And even if We were to send down angels to them, and if the dead were to speak to them, and [even if] We were

to assemble before them, face to face, all the things [capable of proving the truth], they would still not commit themselves unless Allah so willed. But [of this] most of them are entirely unaware.

- (6:112) And thus it is that against every prophet We have set up as enemies the evil forces from among humans as well as from among invisible beings that whisper to one another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind. But they could not do this unless your Sustainer had so willed: stand, therefore, aloof from them and from all their false imagery!
- (6:113) So that maybe the hearts of those who are not convinced of the life to come might incline toward Him, and that in Him they might find contentment, and that they might earn whatever they can earn [of merit] (al-An‘ām:95–113).

It is Allah (ﷻ) who splits the grain, the single cereal seed or a growing cereal crop,

Verily, Allah is the one who cleaves the grain and the fruit kernel asunder, bringing forth the living out of that which is dead, and He is the one who brings forth the dead out of that which is alive. This, then, is Allah: and yet, how distorted are your minds! (6:95).

The grain harvest refers to the total bulk of cereals harvested, and includes seed grain for planting the following year, feed grain destined for animal rations, grain used in the production of distillates, and grain used for human consumption — either directly as in rice, or in the form of flour products and breakfast cereals. It is Allah (ﷻ) who causes the grain or seed to tear before its germination. The seed is the mature, fertilized ovule of a plant, containing the embryo and a food store to sustain the seedling during germination, and enclosed within a protective coat, the testa. In gymnosperms (plants having seeds not enclosed in an ovary), the seeds lie exposed on the cone scales; in flowering plants they are protected within the ovary. Some seeds are very large and are

produced in small numbers (for example, the coconut); others are very small and are produced in prodigious numbers (for example, the orchid). Seeds, aided by the fruit, offer a means of dispersal, and in annuals a means of surviving harsh seasons. Some seeds germinate immediately after dispersal while others remain dormant until exposed to specific conditions, such as low temperatures or high light intensities.⁴⁸⁸

Laboratory observation gives some insight into how the germination process begins, such as in flowering plants — one of the two divisions of seed plants, sometimes referred to as the *angiosperms*, the other division being the *gymnosperms*. They are characterized by a seed enclosed in an ovary that has a specialized extension (the stigma) for receiving pollen. The male gametes (a mature sexual reproductive cell having a single set of unpaired chromosomes) produced by the pollen undergo double fertilization of the ovum, forming a zygote (the cell resulting from the union of an ovum and spermatozoon) and a special seed storage tissue (the endosperm). Secondary vascular tissue develops from cambial layers, and contains cells unique to flowering plants: vessels in the xylem (the woody part of plants; the supporting and water conducting tissues) and companion cells in the phloem (conducts synthesized food substances from leaves to parts where needed). The group includes all plants in which the reproductive organ is a flower, hence the commonly used name. Flowering plants are divided into monocotyledons (flowering plant with an embryo that bears a single cotyledon, or seed leaf, such as grasses, lilies, and palms) and dicotyledons (flowering plant with an embryo that bears two cotyledons, or seed leaves, such as daisies, oaks, and hawthorns) on the basis of cotyledon number, and further subdivided into various major groups such as orders and families, the exact divisions varying with the system in use. Flowering plants are the most advanced vascular plants, and the most common in terms of both numbers and distribution, with an estimated 250,000 species occurring in all parts of the world.⁴⁸⁹

Gymnosperms, the commonly used name for one of the two divisions of seed plants, are distinguished by naked seeds (that is,

not enclosed in an ovary), but the members differ widely from each other, and are now regarded as deriving from several entirely separate ancestral lines. It contains both living (for example, cone-bearing trees, or conifers) and entirely fossil groups. Early gymnosperms were abundant during the Carboniferous period, forming many of the coal deposits, and becoming the dominant vegetation during the Jurassic (approximately 135–190 million years ago) and Cretaceous (63–135 million years ago) periods, after which many became extinct. Living genera (taxonomic group containing one or more species) again became widespread, particularly during the last glaciation, and are still found in cold temperate to sub-tropical regions, and even in the tropics on high mountains; but many genera are now confined to small geographical areas.⁴⁹⁰

The dynamic that Allah (ﷻ) is referring to in this *āyah* is the germination and reproduction of food grains, cereal grains, plant seeds, and flower seeds among others. The Qur'anic *ḥabb* may refer to *grain*. And under this category there are cereal grains that are members of the grass family. They include wheat, millet, oats, rice, rye, sorghum, triticale, and corn. The development of ancient civilizations relied upon the cultivation of grain, which allowed for more effective food production from the land. Wheat and barley farming began, by some accounts, as early as 7000BCE. Dried grains store well, and their cultivation spread rapidly in Asia, Africa, and Europe. In the Americas, corn spread from Mexico into other regions of North America. Much of modern grain production is devoted to livestock feed for meat production.⁴⁹¹

Cereal grains account for about 40% of the world crop production. Americans eat close to 150 pounds of grains per person per year. However, in the early-1900s the average consumption was twice as much: 300 lb/year. This decline correlates with increased consumption of sugar and fat. Grains are dietary staples throughout the world due to their high content of complex carbohydrate (starch and fiber), their protein, and the ease of cultivation. Grains generally lack vitamins C, D, B12, and A. Yellow corn contains small amounts of beta carotene, the precursor of vitamin A. Grains are low in calcium, and their protein is generally low in essential

amino acids such as lysine. In modern times cereal grain products and flour have been fortified/enriched with amino acids, vitamins, and minerals to increase their nutritional value.⁴⁹²

Cerealing technology involves modifying starch through malting or sprouting. Seeds are germinated to activate enzymes that partially degrade starch to sugar. This strategy is used in brewing, baking, and the production of distilled beverages. Milling refers to grinding and/or crushing (rolling) grains to remove fibrous hull and to produce meal or flour for baking. Products from cereal grains include bread and other baked goods, breakfast cereal, flour, infant cereal, and popular snack foods like chips and crackers. Grain substitutes are important alternatives, particularly for those with wheat and gluten sensitivities. Amaranth, buckwheat, and quinoa are not related to grains, so cross allergies with wheat are less likely.⁴⁹³

The affirmation of Allah (ﷻ) being the one who parts the seed and the kernel to set into motion the reproduction of plant life is one of those areas that man wants to ignore. The fruits and vegetables consumed by man are a case in point. Fruit, strictly speaking, is the ripened ovary and seeds of a plant, but more generally the word is used to include any structures closely associated with these, such as a swollen receptacle. A simple or true fruit, such as an orange or an apple, develops from a flower with one or several fused carpels (a simple pistil or one element of a compound pistil); an aggregate fruit, such as a raspberry, from a flower with several free carpels; and a multiple fruit, such as a pineapple, from several flowers. When structures or tissues other than those of the gynoecium (the female ovule-bearing part of a flower composed of ovary, style, and stigma) are involved, the result is an accessory or false fruit. Fruits can be divided into two main groups: dry and fleshy; in the latter, the middle layer of the ovary will become succulent (lush and sappy). Further classification is based mainly on carpel or seed number, dehiscence (whether the fruit splits to release the seeds), and to a lesser extent on derivation of tissues. Dry fruits can be dehiscent or not; fleshy fruits are always indehiscent. Common names such as “nut” and “berry” are often wildly inaccurate in describing the actual type of fruit to which they are applied.⁴⁹⁴

The role played in seed dispersal greatly influences the structure of the fruit, which may be dispersed as a single unit. Shape may be important for scattering the seeds, as with winged fruits, and in the use of bristles for attaching the fruit to passing animals or for anchoring it in soil. Corky fruits provide buoyancy in water, while fleshy fruits may attract animals. Some plants produce different types of fruits to take advantage of more than one dispersal agent. A few plants are able to produce fruits without prior pollination and thus fertilization of the flowers, giving seedless fruits, for example, banana, cucumber, and some citrus fruits. This trait, called *natural parthenocarpy*, can be commercially desirable, and fruit growers can imitate it by the use of hormones (*induced parthenocarpy*) to produce crops such as seedless tomatoes.⁴⁹⁵

On the Origin of Life

The “splitting of small hard fruit and the inner and usually edible part of seed, grain, nut, or fruit” boils down ultimately to the question of how life emerged and then subsequently developed here on earth. In looking for an answer to this question through the agency of the secular-scientific mind, it could be said with good confidence that the origin of life is biology’s most daunting problem. Scientists are good at understanding processes that can be subjected to laboratory analysis and study. But since life apparently emerged some 3.5–4 billion years ago, even the rocks and stones of that era have mostly vanished, and hence analysis is next to impossible. Some progress has been made at reconstructing the process that led to the first living cells. But it consists of conjectures of varying plausibility, not proof.⁴⁹⁶

Modern cells are so complex that it is hard to conceive how they could have assembled spontaneously from the chemicals available on the primitive Earth. A novel approach to the problem was recently developed by Gunter Wächtershäuser, a Munich chemist and patent lawyer. Forget the sophisticated molecules that run today’s cells — the DNA that stores information, the RNA that runs operations, the proteins that serve as structural material, and

the controllers of chemical metabolism; and forget about the cell membrane. All these must have come later.⁴⁹⁷

Life must have started in the simplest possible way, as a cycle, a natural chemical reaction that repeated itself, spinning off by-products, some of which stayed around to maintain and develop the cycle. But, where did this cycle start? Dr. Wachtershauser favors some mineral surface like iron pyrites, also known as fools' gold. A natural catalyst, the iron pyrites could have assembled chemicals like carbon monoxide into biological building blocks. At some stage, the little cycle acquired a cover of protective chemicals, to separate its own reactions from the general milieu. When the cover eventually enveloped the cycle and *broke free* of the mineral surface, the first cell was born. Dr. Wachtershauser and others have shown that important components of today's biochemistry can be formed on iron pyrite surfaces, notably pyruvate, the fuel for a basic energy-producing reaction known as the citric acid cycle.⁴⁹⁸

Another approach to the origin of life concerns RNA (ribonucleic acid), the close chemical cousin of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). RNA performs all of the trickiest operations in the cell, whether retrieving information from DNA or turning this information into proteins. Biologists have long supposed that RNA was the pivotal actor in the earliest cells and later delegated most of its information-storage duties to DNA, a less versatile but more stable chemical. The concept gained credence when Dr. Thomas R. Cech and Dr. Sidney Altman discovered independently that RNA could act as an enzyme, a catalyst of chemical activities, as well as store genetic information.⁴⁹⁹

This dual property of RNA seems in principle to resolve a thorny paradox in the origin of life: that DNA requires a protein catalyst for its replication, and the protein requires DNA to make it, implying that neither could exist without the other's being there first. RNA could have performed both functions. Chemists have not yet devised an RNA molecule that can replicate itself. But they have shown that RNA molecules can copy short pieces of RNA. This bolsters the notion that before DNA, there was an RNA world in which RNA, or some similar precursor, ran the show.⁵⁰⁰

The subunits of RNA molecules are themselves complex chemicals. It is not easy to see how the first RNA molecules could have come into existence. But a clay called *montmorillonite*, formed from weathered volcanic ash and familiar in many households as cat litter, has the interesting property of catalyzing the formation of RNA from its subunits. Researchers from the Massachusetts General Hospital reported that montmorillonite clay has another property possibly relevant to the origin of life. It makes droplets of fat molecules rearrange themselves into small bubbles, similar to the membranes that make up the walls of living cells. Often the clay particles are incorporated into the bubbles, the research team found, with many attached RNA molecules. “Mineral particles may have greatly facilitated the emergence of the first cells,” they said.⁵⁰¹

In a second experiment, the researchers found that they could make their proto-cells divide by forcing them through fine holes in a filter. A natural counterpart to this process would be water currents forcing bubbles through rock pores. Researchers are a long way from reconstructing any plausible path for the origin of life. But they have not given up. And they always conclude, no matter how fragmentary their evidence, that life is possible.⁵⁰²

In truth and reality, Allah is the one who separates and divides the mature fertilized plant ovule [consisting of an embryo and its food source and having a protective layer], and He also separates and divides the pulp — the core substance — bringing forth the living out of that which is dead, and He is the one who brings forth the dead out of that which is alive. This, then, is Allah: and yet, how misdirected are their minds! (6:95).

Insofar as the inception of life is concerned, the secular, scriptureless scientific mind has developed detailed descriptions of some biological processes; however, all of these are far from comprehensive. Consider below a sampling of this scientific information, as descriptive as it may be, and then contrast it with Allah’s (ﷻ) authoritative words on His act of creation.

Contemporary biological and biochemical understanding suggests that all living organisms must perform certain life processes in order to survive. Some processes are common to all organisms; others are unique to certain groups. A few of the main ones include,

1. *making or obtaining food* – green plants and algae are autotrophs.

In the presence of light, they produce their own food in a complex series of reactions that make up the process of photosynthesis. The process takes place in special cell structures, typically chloroplast, that contain the light-absorbing pigment chlorophyll. Briefly, photosynthesis converts carbon dioxide, water, and light energy into glucose and oxygen; the light energy is changed into chemical energy that holds the glucose molecule together.

Without photosynthesis, life as we know it would not exist. Animals and other heterotrophs depend, directly or indirectly, on autotrophs for their food. Herbivores, such as cows and sea urchins, are heterotrophs that feed directly on green plants and algae. Carnivores, such as lions and spiders, feed mainly on the flesh of other animals. Omnivores, including humans and bluebirds, eat both plants and animals.⁵⁰³

2. *chemical synthesis* – in numerous chemical reactions, an organism makes, or synthesizes, molecules needed to maintain structure, grow, and carry out chemical processes. For instance, plant cells convert some of the glucose created during photosynthesis into cellulose, a complex carbohydrate that is the main constituent of plant cell walls. The human body takes phosphorus obtained from meat and other foodstuffs and incorporates it in nucleic acid molecules.⁵⁰⁴
3. *cellular respiration* – every living cell needs a continuous supply of energy to perform vital life processes. During a series of many reactions that make up respiration, food molecules are broken down, releasing energy in the form of adenosine triphosphate (ATP).⁵⁰⁵
4. *excretion* – metabolism produces various waste products that must be removed, or excreted, from an organism. The oxygen produced during photosynthesis is a waste product; although

the organism uses some of the oxygen for respiration, most is released into the atmosphere (by land plants) or water (by algae). In birds, the metabolism of proteins produces uric acid, an insoluble waste excreted as a thick paste.⁵⁰⁶

5. *coordination and regulation* – an organism's functions must be coordinated to maintain a stable internal environment. This requires coordination of internal processes as well as regulation of responses to changes in the external environment. In plants, for example, chemicals called auxins and gibberellins work together to elongate stems. If one side of a dahlia stem is in the shade, auxins concentrate there; the cells on the shaded side grow faster and longer, causing the stem to gradually bend toward the light. In animals, nerve cells and chemicals called hormones regulate many aspects of physiology and behavior.⁵⁰⁷
6. *growth and reproduction* – all organisms grow in size. Plants grow only at the tips of their shoots and leaves, whereas humans grow throughout their entire length. In most plants, growth goes on indefinitely, whereas humans grow only to a certain point in their development.

Reproduction is not necessary for an individual organism but is essential if a species, or type of organism, is to continue to exist. Asexual reproduction involves only one parent and results in offspring that are genetically identical to the parent. For instance, a strawberry plant can reproduce asexually by sending out a special stem that runs along the ground; a daughter plant develops at the end of the stem, developing roots and leaves and eventually producing runner stems of its own. Strawberry plants, like all plants and animals, also reproduce sexually. Sexual reproduction typically involves two parents and results in offspring that are not genetically identical to either parent. This promotes variability, which is the basis of evolution.⁵⁰⁸

The human scientific mind would dignify itself, even ennoble it, if it added to its evolving physical investigations and discoveries the fact stated in scripture about this subject. Man's intellect should

realize in the broader reality of genesis, the origins of life, and the occurrence of birth that it is Allah (ﷻ) who brings living matter out of inanimate matter. This universe or this planet existed before there was life. Then life set in. It was Allah who initiated life out of nothing, as it were. Perhaps a more broad-minded way of saying the same thing is that Allah brought forth living matter out of dead matter. How, exactly was that done? Man simply does not know — and may never know. Ever since its beginning, life commences from the lifeless. Non-organic matter turns into organic substance. This ongoing transfer of life from material lacking the properties characteristic of living organisms to cells, tissues, organs, and then a living being is done through the will of Allah. And when this very process begins to reverse itself, organic and full-fledged lively beings go from robust life vitality into diminishing viability, decreasing energy, and expiring vital signs until finally death occurs. This is also an expression of Allah's will in the life of plants, animals, and the living man.

“Bringing forth the living out of that which is dead, and He is the one who brings forth the dead out of that which is alive.” Only Allah (ﷻ) can do that. Only He can initiate life in its inception out of nothing. No entity or being can transform inanimate and inorganic things into forms of life except Allah. And no one can turn this process around except Allah. How does this all begin, and how exactly do the details play out? No one has a definite and certain answer to such questions. Every explanation of life that either rejects or questions Allah being its originator and maker amounts to speculation, probabilities, and theories.

Europe's break with its anachronistic church brought forth philosophers, scientists, and intellectuals who produced enough mumbo-jumbo about this issue to fill libraries and bookstores across the world. But what this, in fact, says to those who are steeped in scripture is that these runaway philosophers, scientists, and intellectuals were expressing their intractable and recalcitrant attitudes toward divinity, scripture, and prophethood, rather than looking for answers with objectivity and sincerity. It is time for the collective human intellect to come back to its Sustainer, and repeat

with this Qur'an, **“This, then, is Allah: and yet, how demoralized are your minds?”**

The genesis of life is mentioned many times in this amazing Qur'an. The act of creation that gave birth to the universe is recounted in this expansive Book — all for the purpose of identifying the power of Allah (ﷻ) and affirming His creation and creativity. Doing so dwarfs the false gods and the lordlike impostors who try to take credit for creation or for finding some explanation for creation without a creator. Recognizing Allah as Maker, Creator, and Originator of life, being, and existence would automatically accord Him His authority, dominance, and superiority. And this makes for a comfortable and suitable relationship between the Creator and created beings, namely we, His human subjects.

These issues, when presented in the course of the Qur'an, were not meant to produce theological conjectures or philosophical hypotheses. This *dīn* is more serious than to be diluted by or subsumed into such pathetic assumptions and pitiable postulations. What is important in stating the truth about these matters is for man to condition his thoughts or to habituate the way he develops his thoughts in the correct mode, which makes for an easier life — a life void of the tension and conflict that comes from ignoring Allah (ﷻ) or misunderstanding Him.

The conceptual correction alluded to here occurs when people realize that Allah (ﷻ) is the authority, and not human beings masquerading as “authorities.” When humans — individuals or elites — break from the authority of Allah they become vicious, violent, and cavalier. The displacement of authority from the divine to the human is the central issue in social life that causes instability and tension, then conflict and wars. All these could be avoided or minimized if man simply acknowledged his humanity and affirmed His authority/divinity, **“This, then, is Allah: and yet, how convoluted are your minds!”** It is this absent dimension in the human-to-God relationship that has turned people's lives sour and their societies so bitter. It behooves God to be the authority that He is; and the length and breadth of human history has demonstrated this lesson over and over again.

[He is] the one who causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night to be [a source of] calmness, and the Sun and the Moon to run their calculated course: [all] this is laid down by the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing (6:96).

The One who causes the seed and kernel to break, also causes the dawn to break. He willed the night to be a time of “settling-in.” The Sun and the Moon have been given their “divinely-computed” trajectory. That is because He is the All-Powerful and the All-Cognizant. Akin to the way physical seeds are split is the way an observable morning is split. In this act of splitting there is a form of emission: a radiance of luminance. Plants and fruits emerge from one form of splitting while light and day emerge from another type of splitting.

There is also a correlation/relationship between these two acts of “splitting.” The splitting of life out of grains and seeds and the splitting of light out of night and darkness are related to the growth of plants, produce, and plant life on earth. The fact that the Earth rotates on its axis the way it does and with a particular speed, the fact that the Moon is located where it is and at its calculated distance from the Earth, the fact that the Sun is computed to be where it is and with its characteristics, and the fact that the volume and substance of Earth, Sun, and Moon — all these facts — are what make life possible on planet Earth. These measurements, quantities, and judgements needed to be placed — exactly as they are — to sustain the forms of life on this living planet. This is yet another expression of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority on earth, in our lives, and even in our liveliness. Had it not been for these specifications of size, distance, mass, density, volume, and proportions there would be no plant life coming out of the splitting and germination of seeds, grains, and kernels.

A hard look at the mathematical and physical facts about the Moon, Sun, and Earth leaves no room for chance or random occurrence. Those “intellectuals” who contrive theories about random creation are obviously on a psychological “escapist” route from

their Creator. Theirs is not a mental certainty, rather an emotional reaction to their history of church fallacies about science and the universe. But the church ceased to be of any influence long ago; for over 200 years now, the church has been discredited concerning these scientific issues. So, why are they still generating theory upon theory insisting that creation emerged spontaneously without the influence of the Creator? Because “science,” throughout its growth and expansion in the materialistically dominated part of the world, has been a convenient foil for the rejection of God, His commandments, and His authority.

And He it is who has set up the stars for you so that you might be guided by them in the midst of the deep darkness of land and sea: clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages to people of [deep] knowledge (6:97).

The Qur’an even ventures beyond the Solar System, into the galaxy and cosmos to consider the locations and significance of the stars and heavenly bodies.

A star is a sphere of matter (gas) held together entirely by its own gravitational field, and it generates energy by means of nuclear fusion reactions in its deep interior. The important distinguishing feature of a star is the presence of a natural nuclear reactor in its core, where the pressure of the overlying mass of material is sufficient to cause nuclear reactions, the principal one of which is the conversion of hydrogen to helium. About 0.5% of the mass becomes electromagnetic radiation. The minimum mass needed to make a star is approximately 7% of the mass of the Sun (1.989×10^{30} kg); the maximum about 100 times as great as the Sun.⁵⁰⁹

The life cycles of stars are responsible for the rich chemical complexity of the universe and are intimately connected to the existence of life. Soon after the beginning of the universe, it is thought that stars have been forming and then producing heavy elements as a byproduct of energy generation at their cores. When their nuclear fuel is exhausted, some of these fusion products are released back

into space, in the process enriching the interstellar medium, the raw materials for formation of subsequent generations of stars.⁵¹⁰

The space between stars is vast (typically tens of trillions of miles between two stars), and that space is not empty. Astronomers refer to this space as interstellar space; the material distributed throughout interstellar space is referred to as the interstellar medium (ISM). The ISM is composed of thinly spread gas atoms, mostly hydrogen with a smaller amount of helium, and traces of other elements, as well as a small amount of dusty solid material. Conditions in the ISM are extreme: atoms are so thinly spread that a cube-shape region 500 miles on a side contains only about a gram of matter. Forming a star from such diffuse material requires compacting interstellar gas by a trillion trillion times. Most star formation occurs in denser accumulations of interstellar gas called Giant Molecular Clouds (GMCs), so-called because they contain enough raw material, mostly in the form of hydrogen molecules, to make hundreds of thousands of stars. In these clouds, the gas can be thousands of times denser than average but even colder, reaching temperatures of 10 K (less than -400 °F). GMCs are found in the spiral arms of the Milky Way galaxy. The formation of individual stars occurs in denser clumps within GMCs, where gravity pulls together the million trillion trillion kilograms of interstellar matter necessary to make a star. This accumulated matter is known as a proto-star, enough raw material to make a star but not yet producing energy through nuclear fusion. Although there are tantalizing clues, astronomers have yet to definitively observe the initial gravitational infall needed to form a proto-star, though later stages have been seen. Observations also show that collapse is accompanied by the formation of a disk of interstellar material around the proto-star's equator; this proto-planetary disk is presumably the material from which planets form.⁵¹¹

As more material accumulates, the central temperature of the proto-star reaches the millions of degrees necessary for hydrogen atoms to combine to form helium. The mass of helium produced in these reactions is smaller than the initial hydrogen; the difference is converted to energy. The onset of fusion marks the true birth of

the star. After a period during which the star settles into its final configuration and surrounding cloud material is cleared away, the star becomes a stable main-sequence star, steadily converting hydrogen to helium in its hottest central regions. Within GMCs, stars form in groups of hundreds or thousands of stars, and a GMC may experience multiple episodes of star formation. The smallest stars have masses of about one-twelfth the Sun's mass. Below this mass, the center of a hydrogen gas sphere does not reach high enough temperatures to fuse hydrogen into helium; an object below this mass is known as a brown dwarf. Stars form with masses up to about 100 times the Sun's mass. The smaller the mass, the more stars of that mass there are; stars smaller than the Sun are the most common; high-mass stars are rare.⁵¹²

Once the structure of a star stabilizes, it steadily converts hydrogen to helium in its core. This phase in a star's life, known as the main sequence, lasts far longer than a star's formation or death. The stable structure arises from the balance between gravity, trying to compress the star; and internal pressure, generated by energy released in the nuclear reactions, pushing outward. Since the fuel for nuclear fusion is hydrogen, and since stars are made of enormous quantities of this fuel, the main-sequence stage can continue for millions or billions of years. Although high-mass stars contain more hydrogen fuel than low-mass stars, they have higher power outputs and run through the available hydrogen faster. The highest-mass stars use up their nuclear fuel in a few million years. The Sun has enough fuel to last 10 billion years. The smallest stars will take hundreds of billions of years to run through their fuel.⁵¹³

As hydrogen is replaced by helium in a stellar core, a star enters the post-main-sequence stage. The core shrinks and becomes hotter, allowing helium fusion to begin, increasing the nuclear reaction rate and power output of the star. The star's outer layers expand 100–1,000 times the main-sequence diameter and become cooler. This is known as the red giant phase.⁵¹⁴

In lower-mass stars like the Sun, atoms as massive as carbon and oxygen are formed at the core. The expanded outer layers begin to flow away from the core, dispersing back into interstellar

space during the planetary nebula phase. The remaining stellar core, composed of carbon, oxygen, and electrons, has about the mass of the Sun but with a diameter about the same as Earth. This remnant of a low-mass star's life is a white dwarf. The large gravitational force trying to collapse the core is offset by a quantum effect, electron degeneracy pressure, which prevents electrons from occupying the same space and as a result provides an outward force to hold up the core.⁵¹⁵

In higher-mass stars, central pressures are high enough to allow additional fusion reactions, producing heavier elements like silicon, sulfur, and iron. The resulting internal structure is onion-like, with layers of earlier fusion products lying atop the stellar core. When iron is formed in the core, no other fusion reactions can occur without removing pressure from the system, and the core rapidly collapses. If the core mass is less than three times the mass of the Sun, collapse is halted by neutron degeneracy pressure when the core is about 10 km across. The resulting high-density object is a neutron star. As neutron pressure halts collapse of the core, the resulting rebound ejects the star's outer layers back into interstellar space in a supernova explosion. The interstellar medium is thereby enriched with heavy elements, including elements such as carbon, oxygen, iron, sulfur, and phosphorous, which are crucial to life on Earth. The Sun and Earth presumably formed from supernova-enriched interstellar gas.⁵¹⁶

In stars where the core mass exceeds three times the Sun's mass, even neutron pressure cannot halt the collapse once all core fuel sources have been exhausted. The core collapses to an infinitely dense mass called a black hole. The gravitational force within a few tens of kilometers of such a stellar black hole is so strong that even light cannot escape from it. The precise fate of the star's outer layers is not clear. Since high-mass stars are rare, few possible stellar black holes have been identified, and none has been observed during the collapse phase.⁵¹⁷

These are man's scientific assumptions about the stars. This information may be modified as more technologically advanced instruments become available to scientists, and as new discoveries

into space produce new information about this relatively unknown universe. But back here on planet Earth the stars in the galaxies are for practical purposes “...set up by Him for you so that you might be guided by them in the midst of the deep darkness of land and sea...” And to be guided in marine and land navigation by the stars, man would need to employ the disciplines of geography, astronomy, and physics, “Clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these illustrations to people of [scholarly] knowledge.”

And He it is who has brought you [all] into being out of one living entity, and [has appointed for each of you] a time limit [on earth] and a resting place [after death]: clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these presentations to people who can grasp the truth! (6:98).

Allah (ﷻ) is the one who initiated man from one living self (*nafs*). Life is engulfed in a male depot and a female deposit (*mustaqarrun wa-mustawda'*). Or life is located in a world storehouse and in a post-worldly receptacle.

This *āyah* leaves no room for gender discrimination. It is He who originated human beings from one *nafs* (breathing being). The word *you* in “...brought you [all] into being...” includes both males and females. And though these humans, males and females alike, will become established in this world, they will ultimately end up in their burial vaults. These movements through life should be sufficient for people to respect one another and reciprocate with each other on the basis of shared responsibilities and equal status in the presence of their joint Sustainer, “We have spelled out these instances for people who can apprehend the truth.” And as for the non-objective, partial, and close-minded they will continue to fall short of these truths that come to them courtesy of this universal Qur'an.

The Natural World Was Systematized to Nurture Life

The eye-opening Qur'an now transitions to the manifestations and scenes of life on earth. The *āyāt* move from the creation of life to the expression of life,

And He it is who has caused the waters to come down from the sky; and by this means have We brought forth all living growth, and out of this have We brought forth verdure. Out of this do We bring forth close-growing grain; and out of the spathe of the palm tree, dates in thick clusters; and gardens of vines, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate: [all] so alike, and yet so different! Behold their fruit when it comes to fruition and ripens! Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who will commit themselves [to Allah]! (6:99).

Many times in this flowing Qur'an, water is mentioned along with life and the sequence of events involved in the development of organisms. Water coming down from the sky as rainfall is a type of precipitation in which water droplets reach the ground in a liquid state. When water droplets are small, rain may be called drizzle. In temperate and humid regions, rainfall may form the major contribution to annual precipitation totals, while at high latitudes snow may be the main contributor.

Precipitation is a climatic term covering rainfall, drizzle, snow, sleet, hail, and dew. As rising air cools, it condenses around dust particles to form water droplets and clouds. If the droplet grows to a critical size, it will fall as precipitation; the type reaching the ground depends on the air temperature between the cloud and the ground. In many parts of the world, rain and snow are the main contributors, and often the words *rainfall* and *precipitation* are used interchangeably.⁵¹⁸

Out of this water Allah (ﷻ) causes all types of vegetation, plants, and produce to spring forth. Water, the most abundant molecular compound on earth, is a liquid in the temperature range 0–100 °C and 1 atm of pressure (14.6959 psi); it freezes to ice at 0

°C and boils to steam at 100 °C. Covering about 75% of the Earth's surface, and dissolving almost everything to some extent, it is essential to life, and occurs in all living organisms. It is strongly hydrogen-bonded in the liquid phase, and co-ordinates (a peculiar covalent bond, called a co-ordinate bond, in which the oxygen atom of the water molecule contributes both electrons to the bond) to dissolved ions. Unusually, the solid is less dense than the liquid; this results in ice floating, and accounts for the destructiveness of continued freezing and thawing. Water containing substantial concentrations of calcium and magnesium ions is called "hard," and is "softened" by replacing these ions with sodium or potassium, which do not form insoluble products with soaps.⁵¹⁹

When the words of the Qur'an speak of water, it is the unadulterated water that comes down from the clouds without the toxins, pollutants, and contaminants that man has now placed in the air. Man's world today has been brought to the brink by industrial contamination. Acid rain may be the most insidious of all airborne pollution. Unlike smog, it is invisible; unlike chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), it does its damage not in the upper reaches of the atmosphere, but right here on earth. Acid rain also serves as perhaps the best example of how a form of pollution can cause global environmental damage, as well as trans-boundary political strife. The product of invisible gases — sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, produced primarily by coal-burning plants and automobile exhaust — acid rain is carried by winds of the upper atmosphere from place to place without regard for boundaries. It may originate in Ohio or Britain, but it carries its destruction to lakes and forests as far away as Ontario and Norway. The resulting devastation has caused lakes to die, forests to shrivel, and spurred rifts between governments that may take decades to repair.⁵²⁰

Though acid rain was first detected more than 150 years ago, its cause remains a contentious issue between scientists, policymakers, and environmentalists. Although man-made emissions were a recognized contributor, some experts claimed that decaying vegetation, forest fires, bacterial decomposition, volcanoes, and even lightning, were equal parties to the acid-heavy rains. In the past few decades,

however, after years of intensive research and international study, sophisticated tracking of polluted air masses has proven that man-made emissions are in fact the worst offenders. Since that scientific verification, some of the dirtiest emissions have been slowed in North America and parts of Europe. Coal-burning, which produces the highly acidic sulfur dioxide, is leveling off in a handful of industrial countries as a result of utility companies switching to low-sulfur coal, installing scrubbers on smokestacks, and using coal “washed” clean of its worst pollutants. Measures adopted by the auto industry have also helped to lessen acid rain, including the production of a growing number of fuel-efficient cars, the use of unleaded gasoline and, in the US and Canada, catalytic converters. Despite such technological improvements, acid rain pollution in Eastern Europe, China, Russia, India, and Afro-Asian countries is worsening.⁵²¹

Acid rain captured the attention of some lawmakers, the media, and the public in the past two generations, as conclusive reports from scientists proved that rains and snows are poisoning streams and lakes. Studies showed how, once captured in huge weather systems, the acid-forming pollutants could travel 500–1,000 miles from their point of origin. Concerns about acid rain have broadened to include threats to fresh water, forests, and public health. And while there are skeptics about acid rain’s effects (some scientists suggest that air pollution is so insidious that it is difficult to separate the effects of any one chemical reaction) there is clear consensus that acid rain is no overnight sensation, but a long-term threat to the world’s ecosystems.⁵²²

The history of “acid precipitation” dates back well over a century. The term “acid rain” was first used in 1852 by an English chemist, Robert Angus Smith, to describe the sooty skies of industrial Manchester and the acidity found in local precipitation. Yet more than 125 years later, when America’s Clean Air Act was first amended, acid rain was not addressed. Its causes and effects were still not well understood.⁵²³

Smith’s studies were neglected until the 1950s, when a Canadian ecologist tried to generate interest in what he perceived as a worsening problem. But the first detailed scientific reports of the

acid rain problem to gain wide acceptance did not emerge until 1967 in Sweden. Over the next few years, lakes and streams in North America and Europe (their beds low in acid-absorbing limestone) began to wither. Although fish and vegetation were dying, scientists could only guess at the reasons. Then, in the early-1970s, mountaintop trees in the Black Forest of West Germany exhibited signs of inexplicable abuse: needles and leaves became discolored and fell, growth slowed, roots shriveled, insects and disease were rampant. In the early-1980s, similar signs of unnatural decay surfaced in forests in the Appalachians and Vermont's Green Mountains. By 1982, almost 40% of the trees on Mount Mitchell in North Carolina were defoliated and 7% died. Scientists around the world became convinced that the devastation they were seeing in lakes and streams — and the inexplicable dying of forests — was yet another outcome of man-made chemicals in the atmosphere.⁵²⁴

By the mid-1980s, debate over acid rain had sparked international fury, pitting state against state, and nation against nation. Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney called the acid rain mess a “rapidly escalating ecological tragedy” and blamed much of the destruction in his country on coal-burning power plants in the American heartland. In Sweden, acid rain pollution was called “an undeclared act of war” — since most of the acidifying chemicals damaging Swedish lakes and forests originated in the sulfur dioxide emissions of West Germany and other European nations. The estimated worldwide cost of dealing with just half of the causes of acid rain ranges in the tens of billions of dollars.⁵²⁵

Even while data are being collected to prove (or disprove) exactly how much of the blame can be attributed to acid rain, it is apparent that ignoring the problem is one of the most shortsighted global environmental blunders of all. People have watched it worsen in North America for several decades, and in Europe for almost three decades. Ultimately, acid rain threatens both plant and animal life in tens of thousands of lakes and streams. Around the globe, millions of acres of forests that have thrived for over 300 million years are slowly being decimated by the nitric and sulfuric acids that rain on them.⁵²⁶

Cost is the primary rationale cited by industry and politicians for failing to tackle acid rain. Powerful lobbies have fought proposals that would mandate adding high-tech cleaners to power plants and cars. Lawmakers from coal-mining regions argue that the potential loss of tens of thousands of mining jobs is sufficient reason for being “cautious.” Everyone agrees that increased cleanup costs will eventually be borne by consumers. Yet environmentalists and lawmakers around the world are slowly prodding industry to change. Predictably, coal, car, and utility industries denounce legal motions to curtail the effects of such pollution as acid rain as “harmful to business.”⁵²⁷

The grains that grow from heavenly “distilled” waters are threatened. The palm trees and their dates, the gardens of vines, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate — all are now less than the quality they were meant to be, **“Certainly, in all this there are messages indeed for people who will commit themselves [to Allah]!”** Reaching this critical turn of events, the ensuing *āyah* is on target,

And yet, some [people] have come to attribute to all manner of invisible beings a place side by side with Allah — although it is He who has created them [all]; and in their ignorance they have invented for Him sons and daughters! Limitless is He in His glory, and sublimely exalted above anything that men may devise by way of definitions: the magnificent Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could it be that He should have a child without there ever having been a mate for Him — since it is He who has created everything, and He alone knows everything? (6:100–101).

Though the following meaning has probably not appeared in previous *tafsir* literature, the word *jinn* (*invisible beings*), even though in general usage refers to other intelligent species besides man who are invisible or inconspicuous, in this context, could refer to those beings who rule from behind the scenes. They are respon-

sible for the corruption, pollution, and virtual destruction of the Earth's ecosystems, not to mention human societies, if they continue to be the hidden and undiscovered gods of modern times. In theological terms, they blur the distinction between human and divine, so that in practical terms they can get away with their authoritarian position in exclusion to Allah (ﷻ) who has revealed the truth that sets the record straight and exposes them from behind their iron and velvet curtains. He sheds light on their greed that is translated into the policies and laws responsible for destroying the natural habitat as well as human societies. How many times does Allah (ﷻ) have to awaken us to the pivotal issue of scripture and prophets?

Such is Allah, your Sustainer: there is no deity/authority save Him, the Creator of everything: comply, then with Him alone — for it is He who has everything in His care (6:102).

Global warming, ozone depletion, smog, acid rain, vanishing rain forests, garbage, hazardous waste, saltwater pollution, freshwater pollution, energy consumption, maldistribution of populations and wealth — all these and other malaises began when man decided to be the authority over nature and society by omitting or denying the authority of God, **“No human vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all human vision: for He alone is the Unfathomable, the All-Aware.”**

Means of insight have now come to you from your Sustainer [through this divine Writ]. Whoever, therefore, chooses to see, does so for his own good; and whoever chooses to remain blind, does so to his own hurt. And [say to the blind of heart], “I am not your keeper” (6:104).

When Allah (ﷻ) orders the committed Muslims to conform to Him, they are required to observe and honor His nature, which has

become their trust. Relying on the trivial amount of information man has at his disposal, he cannot hold together the natural and social realms without His insights and clear perception of reality, existence, life, and being. On the other hand, the Muslims cannot afford to live out meaningless and directionless lives by praying for those who are blind in their hearts to be guided. The Muslims of today, if they are going to accept the responsibility of leadership, are going to have to take the initiative and lead themselves, first and foremost. If we, the committed Muslims, do not do this, no one else is going to do it for us, **“And [say to the blind of heart], ‘I am not your keeper.’”**

Follow you what has been revealed to you by your Sustainer — save whom there is no deity/authority — and turn your back upon all who assign divinity/authority to any beside Him (6:106).

This is the parting line. Either man follows the guidelines of Allah (ﷻ) or he follows the conflicting diktats of those who are opposed to Him. If he is sure there is no god besides Him, then the decision is easy and welcoming. But if he entertains some doubts, he will suffer in proportion to the doubts he has.

Yet, if Allah so willed, they would not have attributed divinity/authority to any beside Him; hence, We have not made you their keeper, and neither are you responsible for their conduct (6:107).

When the world is literally and “naturally” self-destructing, and the committed Muslims are in opposition to the elite and the establishment that stand behind the disintegration in nature and man, then the former cannot be held responsible for the latter’s actions and decisions. But if, God forbid, the Muslims happen to be on the same page as the elite and the unjust, or if they are passive to what the evil-mongers are doing, then they will have to bear the consequences of the establishment’s harmful decisions and negative policies.

But do not vilify those [beings] whom they invoke besides Allah, lest they vilify Allah out of spite, and in ignorance; for, goodly indeed have We made their own [incorrect] doings appear to every community. In time, [however], unto their Sustainer they must return: and then He will make them [truly] understand all that they were doing (6:108).

This teaches the committed Muslims not to use foul language when referring to the *mushriks'* false gods and authorities. This may cause them in their whipped-up hatred and animosity to begin using foul language against Allah (ﷻ). This would mean that we, the committed Muslims, are to a certain extent, entrusted with having to avoid what is to their detriment. Could there be a more comprehensive and sweeping morality than this?

Now they swear by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle were shown to them, they would indeed commit to this [divine Writ]. Say, “Miracles are in the power of Allah alone.” And for all you know, even if one should be shown to them, they would not believe; so long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned [away from the truth], even as they did not commit to it in the first instance, and [so] We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro. And even if We were to send down angels to them, and if the dead were to speak to them and [even if] We were to assemble before them, face to face, all the things [that can prove the truth,] they would still not commit themselves unless Allah so willed. But [of this] most of them are entirely unaware (6:109–111).

Having covered this territory extensively in previous pages, the meanings here are clear because these *āyāt* are describing two sets of people. The first comprises those who are viscerally against Allah (ﷻ) and have proved it beyond any doubt, those who will

not commit to Allah even if they are presented with physical miracles and material amazing acts, or with the supernatural interference of God in their daily lives. The second consists of those who are responsible for working the will of Allah (ﷻ) on earth even when they are faced with the formidable power of intransigent evildoers and the opposition of virulent oppressors. Muslims of fervor should come to grips with the fact that there will be a hard-core contingent that will never, in a million years, conform to Allah and His authority.

Prophets Are Opposed by Beings Other Than Man

The committed Muslims are advised to review the substance of *Sūrah al-An'ām* until its theme becomes second nature. This *sūrah* emphasizes the truth about divine authority that has its presence in the expanse of existence, and its bearing on a person's spirit and conscience. Across the full spectrum of human activity, whether sense-directed or in the realm of the unknown, divine authority must be honored and complied with. Divine authority is acknowledged in the genesis of this universe, in the conception of life, in the birth of man, and in the interrelations of a working set of anthropogenic variables. Divine authority is recognized as the principal force that impacts the rise and fall of civilizations. In this scheme of things man stands as a responsible being. Allah's (ﷻ) authority relates directly and compassionately with this field of human responsibilities. Divine authority stands with man as he observes, respects, and abides by this authority in the affairs of the world, in his response to changing circumstances, and in his reaction to "good times" and "bad times." Divine authority is also there on the Day of Accountability and Judgement when man stands alone.

Sūrah al-An'ām takes man on a journey into the horizons of the universe and into the depths of the self. It does all this not as a matter of semantics, theological argumentation, or abstract conclusions, but simply to establish the right and healthy contact between man and Allah (ﷻ). It leaves no gap of functional ignorance between humanity and divinity. When this is done, and man under-

stands his Sustainer and Creator, he will be able to conform to Him and comply with His teaching. When man gets a stronger feel for his humanity as he becomes familiar with Allah's divinity, he will know better than to deify humans or humanize deities. When man realizes that his limited capacities put him in a position of need and obedience, and that Allah's infinite abilities put Him in a position of providence and dominance, then human life in all its manifestations will flourish to its utmost as the self-inflicted suffering resulting from man's own tyranny and injustice would be more notional than real. The latter comes from man either losing touch with God, or being conflicted about the meaning of God's authority and his own need for it.

The *sūrah* moves in this general direction, from beginning to end. Thus, man understands that Allah (ﷻ) is the Creator, the Provider, the Power, the Potency, and the Energy. Consistent with this, man should be able to logically conclude that Allah can as easily forgive an indiscretion as He can punish a transgression. Allah knows the unknown and He is privy to confidential information. Allah works the heart of man, and He works the onset of night and day. All of this immediately qualifies Him to be man's authority. No one else has the power to substitute for Him or the knowledge to supplement Him. By extension, therefore, no one has the authority to rule and regulate on his own. Values and laws owe their origins and corollaries to Allah. What is *ḥarām* (unlawful) or *ḥalāl* (lawful), what is sin or virtue, what is injustice or justice — all these and other similar concepts — are defined authoritatively by Allah as supreme authority. No one else has the knowledge, experience, and wisdom to determine the criteria for such issues because no one else can create, give life or terminate it, offer provisions or limit them, provide sustenance or withhold it — except Allah. The *sūrah* is packed with information and anecdotes that charge the human mind and heart toward affirming Allah as authority.

The discourse here begins by introducing man to Allah's broad mastery and complete command of all His subjects — that is, human beings, as well as their counter form of intelligent life, the jinn,

And thus it is that against every prophet We have set up as enemies the evil forces from among humans as well as from among invisible beings that whisper to one another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind. But they could not do this unless your Sustainer had so willed: stand, therefore, aloof from them and from all their false imagery! (6:112).

Every pulse and move, every development and change of position in all the spheres of life of any kind goes on according to His decree and approximation. Even the gradual encompassing of His messengers' enemies, both human and jinn, is done through His fixed purpose and persistent intent. When the enemies of prophets and messengers are actively engaged in their hostility, they can only do so because they are exercising the God-given freedom to commit wrong. Otherwise, these enemies could have been divinely brought to the truth by nature, by force, or by miracles. Had they been forced to accept the truth from heaven there would not have been any deviation from Allah (ﷻ) or violation of His authority. Even the enmity of these adversaries is made possible by the holy freedom given to man by Allah.

This does not mean that Allah sanctions their evil works or approves of their sinister schemes. In point of fact, there is a measure of freedom that comes with human life, that gives man the liberty to choose between what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, and what is compatible with God and what is not. On this basis, humans opt for belonging to God or disavowing Him. Beyond the transient moments of life, man will return to the custody of Allah, a time and place when the degree of freedom that permits disobedience or hostility to God would have lapsed,

It is in such a way that We have [arranged] enemies of prophets who are both human and jinn; they fashion statements of vanity to each other. And had Allah willed them incapable [of such mischief] they would not have been able to do it. Leave them, then, and

what they are forging. In such a manner, the hearts of those who are not convinced of the Last Day will tune in [to these enemies of Allah]. They will live up to such [misleading information], and will go on ex-cogitating such fraudulence [pertaining to Allah's authority] (6:112–113).

The established fact is that Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) will always be riddled with enemies from both spheres of intelligent life: human and jinn. More literally, these two categories could be referring to beings of acquaintance and beings unnoticed. With all they can do in opposition to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets, these enemies still cannot escape His controlling grip. This being the case, no prophet or prophet-follower needs to rely on an arbiter, evaluator, or premier besides Allah. From the petty to the weighty, this applies to any issue or problem in life. Referring to Allah's authority concerning personal dietary regulations is as important as referring to His authority on matters of war and wealth. Any individual or society that turns for guidance on these and like issues to anything or anyone else has, knowingly or otherwise, tampered with and diminished the authority belonging to Allah, and to Him alone.

This Book of Authority represents the final word on divine guidance to humankind. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) was cautioned against obeying anyone other than Allah when it came to the issue of authority. All "other" authoritative references are no more than sources of doubt and ambiguity. Whoever accedes to them will find out, sooner or later, that he is being misadvised and misguided. The manifest fact remains that it is only Allah (ﷻ) who knows His subjects, who knows when they are on their way toward Him and when they are on their way away from Him.

To reiterate the context, the Arabian *mushriks* wanted the Prophet (ﷺ) to produce miracles or some amazing occurrences that would "substantiate" their faith in what he was saying. They would only relinquish their worldly status to Allah (ﷻ) if He would support His Prophet with some miracles that would unfold in front of their very eyes! This *mushrik* Arabian social attitude even had its

influence on some Muslims who thought that a miracle here or there would not be a bad idea. Thus, this request for miracles had a “social footing” that was not easily dismissible. Recall how the whole notion was set up in the previous *āyāt*,

And they solemnly swore by Allah that if a demonstration of miracles were to come to them, they would commit themselves. Say, “But such demonstration of power is the requisite of Allah.” And what makes you think that if these miracles were to come they would believe? And We move around their mettle and view — as if they had no previous commitment — and then We leave them to advance blindly beyond their point of no return. And if We were to cause angels to descend upon them, and the dead to talk to them, and everything to be brought to them, they will not commit themselves, except if Allah wills it, but most of them are in ignorance (6:109–111).

This last *āyah* above deals with some important divine facts. Firstly, proof for faith or blasphemy, for direction or deviation has no materialistic validation. The *ḥaqq* is its own proof. Its influence upon normal human beings is overwhelming and profound. Yet there are impediments that obstruct a seeking heart or a fervent mind from the gravity of this *ḥaqq*. Secondly, two contending attitudes come out from this exhibition of human nature: the *mushriks*’ demand for miracles and the apparent awkwardness of committed Muslims to finalize in their own minds and public behavior the fact that there are people (*mushriks*) who will never come to Allah’s (ﷻ) side in life.

The Islamic concept of Allah’s power manifestations (*āyāt* or miracles) breaks with its prior scriptural and practical representations. In pre-Islamic times people used to ask their prophets for material miracles. They wanted to see and experience with their own senses how Allah (ﷻ) can interfere with the otherwise unalterable laws of nature or with the “normal” in day-to-day life. A few of their more

spectacular requests included an angel coming down to earth, the dead coming back to life and speaking to them, and inaccessible or unimaginable things happening to them. But then the final season of scripture dawned: from the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) forward, the demonstration of Allah's power would henceforth be detected not in the physical world but in the social or historical context. Primitive people lacking a culture of knowledge may have needed a shock in the form of a miracle to wake them up, but the culture of knowledge that was "kicked off" by the words *iqra'* and *qum* need not fall back upon the standards of preliterate societies. Therefore, when committed Muslims engage the will of Allah they do so without any emphasis on or expectation of miracles. This does not mean that miracles will not happen. To the contrary, they will. However, in the mission of this final Prophet, who brought the sublime Qur'an, miracles are no longer the sweetener or the enticement that wins over the faithful, as was the case in former crude and elemental societies. The world has largely grown into an informed one, and it behooves an informed and educated world to use its information, science, and discoveries to detect the power presentation of Allah (ﷻ) in the social sphere beside the physical sphere.

A miracle — an extraordinary or astonishing event — is attributed to the action of a supernatural or divine power. Belief in miraculous happenings is a feature of practically all religions and occurs in all cultures. Not all cultures regard their particular notion of the supernatural as having power over how the natural world works, yet extraordinary events, forces, and operations — which are accepted as normal, though uncommon — are recognized by these cultures as well. Similarly, the religions of the ancient world were acquainted with few formal miracles, precisely because certain kinds of divine action or cosmic operations (for example, oracles) were largely accepted as part of the "natural" order of things. Ancient Indian mythology abounds in fantastic accounts of the doings of the deities, but the Upanishads and Brahmanas evince an increasing indifference to miracles. Like other expressions of higher mysticism, they consider the spiritual experience of religious insight and transformation as the only "miracle" worth talking about. Nevertheless

Hindu popular religion sets no bounds to the miraculous powers of yogis, and India has been the classic land of wonders.⁵²⁸

There is little room for the miraculous element in Confucianism, but Taoism has produced a rich crop of thaumaturgy (the working of wonders or miracles) and magic on all levels of Chinese folk religion.⁵²⁹ Miracles are taken for granted throughout the Old Testament; God “does wondrous things” especially in the history of the Children of Israel (for example, the ten plagues of Egypt). In the Greco-Roman world miracles were not uncommon; there were miraculous cures (such as at the Sanctuary of Asclepius in Epidaurus), moving statues of gods, resurrections of the dead, virgin births, and the like. However, Cicero in the *De divinatione* denied the possibility of miracles.⁵³⁰

According to the earliest Buddhist accounts, the Buddha Gautama deprecated the miraculous powers that he “possessed” as a matter of course, being “the greatest of all yogis,” as utterly devoid of spiritual significance. Nevertheless, miraculous accounts of his birth and life (and those of later Buddhist saints), as well as miracles in connection with his relics, proliferated as time went on, particularly in the Mahayana tradition.⁵³¹

The New Testament, per the church, records various miracles performed by Jesus Christ (ﷺ), of which some relate to healing and others to providing abundantly for specific human needs. Miracles form part of the career, in life as well as after death, of Christian saints, and their occurrence continues (for example, Lourdes); there are duly established pilgrimages to the tombs of wonder-working saints.⁵³²

This attachment to miracles by some of the peoples around the world represents a lapse into emphasizing an outdated issue. The real and forward issue, whether this was demonstrated through the agency of a miracle or otherwise, is the presence of Allah’s power manifestation in the historical, social, and civilizational ups-and-downs of humanity. When acknowledged, this will affirm that guidance or misguidance occurs within the overall will of Allah (ﷻ). Even the deniers of God, the atheists, or the secular types cannot do anything that has not been made doable by Allah. This

means that both those who affirm Allah and those who deny Him remain within His command and control. The deniers may think they are free of God but their intentional disagreement with Him remains in the realm of His authority. Moreover, their denying His authority within their infinitely limited existence does not mean they are living, operating, or functioning outside Allah's aegis.

In this *āyah*,

And if We were to have angels come down to them [the *mushriks*], and if the dead were to speak to them, and if We were to bring all things [they desire] to their attention, they would not commit themselves [to Allah] — except if He wills it — but most of them are ignorant (6:111),

Allah is telling His Prophet to abandon any lingering hope concerning these people who equate idols, individuals, images, and institutions with Allah (ﷻ) — the same ones who disingenuously said, **“If you present us with a miracle [about Allah’s power] we will believe and commit ourselves.”** What Allah is saying is that if He were to bring down the angels and make it possible for them to see these angels with their own eyes; if He were to resurrect the dead and have these dead people speak to them saying that Muhammad (ﷺ) is a prophet, and that what he says is the truth, and that the scripture he presents to them is valid and legitimate; and if He were to have all this scenario unfold in front of them with all the palpable evidence right there in front of them — if all this were to happen — they (the *mushriks*) would still not adhere, affirm, and commit themselves to Allah and His Prophet. The only exclusion to this is the exception willed by Allah, **“Yet many of them [the *mushriks*] remain ignorant.”** They are childlike and crude; they think that commitment to Allah is a plaything, that defying Him is something of no consequence. In a sense, they think they can be with Allah (ﷻ) and be against Him all at the same time. But Allah, whose word is final, says this is not the way it is. Their commitment to Him or their pact against Him is within the sphere of His decree. Those who go

against Him do so because they fail to concur with and accede to His will and way. And so, as deviance and defiance become their thoroughgoing attitude, devastation begins to overtake their lives.

This issue is often the object of confusion for many people. Even though this is not a “rocket science” issue, people are perplexed over it because the information about it is either scarce or skewed. It can plainly be stated that people who want Allah (ﷻ) and who seek Him will eventually find Him, and when they do, they will honor Him with all their emotions and thoughts. And thus will they move toward Him in their lives and beyond. On the other hand, there are people who are opposed to Allah — people who do not want to be reminded of Him and will do anything to void Him from their lives. In this capacity they move away from Him in their lives and beyond until they are condemned and tormented because of their feelings and thoughts about Allah. One way or the other, it is man’s choice that dictates the result of man’s destiny. But regardless of the choice he makes, it will be a way that remains within the range of options made possible by Allah; nothing done by man lies outside this God-given range of human choices and convictions.

According to some Islamic historical narratives, five individuals around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) treated the Qur’an with contempt: al-‘Āṣī ibn Wā’il al-Sahmī, al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī, al-Aswad ibn ‘Abd Yaghūth al-Zahrī, al-Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib, and al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥanzalaḥ. One day they came to the Prophet accompanied by a crowd of people from Makkah and said, “Show us angels who will testify that you are Allah’s messenger. Bring back the dead so that we may ask them whether you are saying the truth or not. Or present for us angels and Allah Himself!” This human defiance of the truth was answered with this *āyah*.⁵³³ It is the current responsibility of Muslims to determine those who hold the Qur’an in contempt in our day and time — those to whom this *āyah* should be regularly repeated.

Once the fact is established that all prophets have enemies, to have it restated in crystallized language in the Scripture of record was a form of consolation for the Islamic Prophet (ﷺ); thus,

In such a manner We have delineated for every prophet enemies [who are] human and jinni demons who inspire themselves with flashing statements of conceit. And had your Sustainer willed it they would not have done so — therefore leave them to their prevarications. In this fashion the hearts of those who do not believe in the final life listen in, and try to be pleasing, and they perpetrate what they are committing (6:112–113).

People who are looking for miracles are not looking for God. They themselves do not want to approach God, rather they want God to approach them. There is an element of ego in this maneuver. Even countless miracles will not prevent the fact that, sooner or later, they will revert to their real selves, which have never been reconciled with Allah (ﷻ). That being the case, Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) will always have antagonists and attackers. This fact is so expressive of how human societies function that its meaning is universal. These antagonists will be demonic characters from both the human species as well as the jinn.⁵³⁴ The diabolical and demonic elements of the jinn will use an elaborate language of deception in waging their wars of hostility and animosity against the prophets and scriptures of Allah. The odd fluctuations in life produce weak-minded people who will fall for this intricate and expatiated scheme of statements. Such people have a psychology that has no expectation of the final life. They are satisfied by going along with the trend, fitting into the worldly status quo, and ultimately showing their animus and ill will to God's prophets.

All of this happens not in defiance of Allah's will but within the decree of Allah (ﷻ). In other words, all the human and jinni opposition to the prophets is within the God-given potential of life. None of this happens outside His God-given "human possibilities." And had Allah wanted to eliminate such "worldly possibilities" none of this animus or bad blood could have happened. All human history would have taken an alternate course that would have excluded the hostile decisions made by people against prophets. In this overall unfolding of events and scripting of history nothing has

been random or lacking any definite plan, order, and purpose. None of this cumulative issue has anything to do with man's strategies or ideologies. Nothing human institutions have cumulatively done can claim "credit" for where human society is today in its standing vis-à-vis Allah.

If these definitions are well established in the minds of committed Muslims, and they should be, then the step forward is to learn from this timeless clash between principled prophets and plebeian people. Muslims lacking experience may think that in their lifelong struggle for Allah (ﷻ) they are simply pitted against feudal lords, tyrannical rulers, and monopolistic interests — and they certainly are — but the bigger picture here illustrates that they are confronted by the combined and complicated fiends of the intellectual species: humans and jinn. Hence, committed Muslims should at the very least relocate their thoughts and feelings in this larger context of the struggle. And once there, they should know that Allah's will is with them, and whatever comes out of their sincere and undiluted struggle for Him will occur according to His calculation and regulation. Undoubtedly, at the end of a selfless Islamic struggle there is always Allah's wisdom.

“And thus We have rendered enemies of every prophet the demons of humans and jinn, who speak softly in refined statements as a matter of folly and vanity.” In other words it is the will of Allah (ﷻ) that every prophet have enemies and hostile forces — the demonic character in both humans and jinn — that try to inflict all manner of damage. Notice that demons and devils are mentioned in the context of Allah's authority and the human struggle to institutionalize it on earth. Conversely in other religious or philosophical understandings, the emphasis lies elsewhere.

Demon, also spelled *daemon*, from the Greek *daimon*, in religions worldwide, represents any of numerous beings, powers, or principles that mediate between gods and humans. In ancient Greece a *daimon* was a supernatural power, and the term was employed almost interchangeably by Homer with *theos*, for a god, though *theos* emphasized the personality of a particular god, whereas *daimon* referred to a more general, indistinct divine force.

Hence, the term was regularly applied to sudden or unexpected supernatural interventions not attributable to any particular deity. It commonly became the power determining a person's fate, and an individual could have a personal *daimon*. As early as Hesiod, the dead of the Golden Age became *daimons*; and later philosophical speculation envisaged them as lower than the gods (possibly mortal) but superior to humanity.⁵³⁵

In Zoroastrianism, a hierarchy of demons (*daevas*) is headed by Angra Mainyu (later called Ahriman), the Evil, or Destructive, Spirit. The demons are in constant battle with Ahura Mazda (later called Ormazd), the Good Lord. The hierarchy of demons in Judaism, which is rooted in ancient Holy Land and Zoroastrian demonology after the post-exilic period (after 538BCE), is quite varied. Evil beings (*shedim* in Hebrew) — meaning *demons*, and applied to foreign gods, or *se'irim* for *hairy demons* — often were believed to inhabit desert wastes, ruins, and graves and to inflict humanity with various physical, psychological, and spiritual disorders. The prince of these demons was called by different names: Satan (the Antagonist), Belial (the Spirit of perversion, darkness, and destruction), Mastema (Enmity, or Opposition), and others. Though the Old Testament refers to Satan as the prosecutor of God's celestial court (Zechariah, 3; Job, 1–2), a hierarchy of demons under Satan or other princes of evil was developed in inter-testamental literature and later Judaism.⁵³⁶

The hierarchy of demons in Christianity is based on various sources: Jewish, Zoroastrian, gnostic, and the indigenous religions that succumbed to Christian missionary imperialism. In the New Testament, Jesus (✝) speaks of Beelzebub as the chief of demons and equates him with Satan. In the European Middle Ages and the Reformation period, various hierarchies of demons were developed, such as those associated with the Seven Deadly Sins: Lucifer (pride), Mammon (avarice), Asmodeus (lechery), Satan (anger), Beelzebub (gluttony), Leviathan (envy), and Belphegor (sloth).⁵³⁷

In Hinduism, the Asuras (the Zoroastrian *ahuras*) are the demons who oppose the Devas (the gods). Among the various classes of *asuras* are *nagas* (serpent demons), Ahi (the demon of

drought), and Kamsa (an arch-demon). Demons that afflict humans include the *raksasas* (grotesque beings who haunt cemeteries, impel the performance of foolish acts, and attack *sadhus*, that is, saintly men), and *pisacas* (beings who haunt places where violent deaths have occurred).⁵³⁸

Buddhists often view their demons as forces that inhibit the achievement of *nirvana* (bliss, or the extinction of desire). An important example is Mara, an arch tempter, who, with his daughters, Rati (Desire), Raga (Pleasure), and Tanha (Restlessness) attempted to dissuade Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, from achieving his enlightenment. As Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism spread to Tibet, China, and Japan, many of the demons of the folk religions of these areas (for example, the Chinese *Kuei-shen* and the Japanese *oni*) were incorporated into Buddhist beliefs.⁵³⁹

Notice that in all the above conceptualizations of demons none of them are actively present in the life struggle for justice, equality, and peace. Therefore, with the above *āyah* and the historical representation of demons in mind, in the Islamic integration of meaning, a demon is any intellectual form of life that exerts any practical opposition to prophets and scriptures — and they do certainly exist.

As per this *āyah*, these intellectual species deceive one another and others by an expository composition and showy display of words. In this public theater of theirs they have the force to infer meaning and influence behavior. This war of words against prophets and scriptures ultimately morphs into sedition against prophets.

The human contestation against prophets and scriptures is well-known to any thinking being who wants to be fair and impartial on the matter. From the Pharaohs to the Neros and from the ancient days of deluge to the current days of “climate change,” the record is wide open and accessible to those with common sense and rational sensitivity. As for the demons or satans of the jinn, this is a more complex and, as of yet, “scientifically” indecipherable issue in its details. The jinn, even though they are a full-fledged species, are not within the sense perception of human beings. They are part of the *ghayb* that Allah (ﷻ) has described in the Qur’an.

The only absolute authority on this *ghayb* is He who tells people what they need to know about it.

Secular Obtuseness to the Reality of the *Ghayb*

As to whether there are other forms of intelligent life in this vast universe or in this ethereal life, the committed Muslim affirms what he is told from on high about this matter. Given what is being covered here, the subject of unknown forms of intelligent and responsible life should be dealt with at some length. This area pertains to what is called in the “scientific” West extraterrestrial life or unidentified flying objects (UFOs). The technological West, because it is the point of reference in our world when it comes to rationality and modernity, needs to be apprised of the meanings of this *āyah* so that it can think and behave normally. The Western mindset refuses to acknowledge the *ghayb* and, by extension, the jinn; consider below the topology of its position(s) before settling into the Qur’anic certitude on what ultimately matters in this area.

The three hardest words for human beings to utter are: *I don’t know*. People demand an accounting for every claim or experience, and when no accounting is available, one will be invented by an “expert” or other claimant to knowledge. Thus when a New Hampshire man, a veteran outdoorsman considered reliable by those who know him, reported a daylight encounter with a nine-foot-tall ape-like creature, a game warden explained it, with neither investigation nor specific cause, as a moose. Or when a number of West Texas motorists, over a period of hours, independently told of close-range sightings of a 200-foot-long, egg-shaped, brilliantly luminous structure, US Air Force personnel conducted a brief inquiry and identified the phenomenon as ball lightning. What the witnesses had described bore no resemblance to this rare natural phenomenon, and the electrical storm that, according to the Air Force, had given rise to it had not occurred according to weather records. In both of these cases, the proposed “explanations” were so flimsy that one can easily conclude it would have been easier just to call the witnesses bald-faced liars and be done with it; either that, or diagnose

them as dangerous lunatics whose vivid hallucinations call for their immediate sedation and hospitalization.⁵⁴⁰

Of course if these were isolated episodes, such as rarely told stories by excitable souls, interested observers could probably tell themselves, “Yes, I suppose it is possible, once in a great while, for someone to see a moose and mistake it for a nine-foot-tall bipedal anthropoid, or for a person to have a close-up view of a globe of ball lightning, ordinarily the size of a basketball or smaller, and judge it to be 200 feet in diameter.” After all, where human behavior is concerned, just about anything that could happen has happened at some time or another.⁵⁴¹

The sorts of colossal perceptual breakdowns being proposed here run counter to the experience of most human beings, as do encounters with hairy giants in New Hampshire woods. Suppose the outdoorsman had seen something else, say a fleeing fugitive, and reported it to the sheriff. It may safely be assumed that the latter would not have said — at least without investigation and specific cause — that the witness had mistaken a moose for a man. Far more likely, the sheriff and his deputies would have raced to the site in anticipation of an immediate arrest. Furthermore, if those who are reading about these accounts allow themselves to believe (still in the absence of specific evidence to the effect) that at times, even under what are ordinarily viewed as good viewing conditions, a moose can look like an ape, they will only be stymied if they try to employ this identification in the many places in the United States where similar “apes” have been reported and where moose (or, in many cases, any wild mammals larger than deer) are not to be found.⁵⁴²

To level indiscriminate charges of dishonesty against all witnesses wherever they live — whether in New Hampshire, Indiana, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, British Columbia, Newfoundland, or just about any state or province — and off-the-cuff, radical speculations about perceptual disorders that suggest profound mental illness are, to say the least, irrational approaches that are characterized more by denial than the desire to find answers. At some point, what the witnesses saw will have to be taken seriously.⁵⁴³

Where the experience of hairy bipeds, UFOs, or other anomalous entities is concerned, one need not believe in, or even have heard of such to see one. The isolated folk of Newfoundland, for example, had never heard of “Sasquatch” or “Bigfoot” — names that did not come into currency until well into the past century from the other side of the continent. Nevertheless, they reported seeing manlike entities they called “Indians.” Few of the Newfoundlanders knew what a real Indian looked like, but nonetheless that was the name they attached to creatures whom other North Americans, who had never heard of Bigfoot or Sasquatch either, were calling “wild men” or “gorillas.”⁵⁴⁴

In our time, even when such phenomena are staples of popular culture, it is still possible to find individuals who have never heard, for example, of UFOs; yet they report extraordinary experiences with what they may interpret as everything from “secret airplanes” to “demons.” Their interpretations aside, they relate sights or occurrences that are in every way congruent with those experienced by more culturally sophisticated observers. Witnesses often say, “I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it myself” — a statement that resonates with meaning. There are some things people believe in not because they are ignorant, credulous, or crazy but because either they or persons they trust see them.⁵⁴⁵

People also see things their ancestors once had a vocabulary for, but is now lost. A young Wisconsin man walking along a country road in the middle of the night came upon a group of peculiarly dressed, mumbling, bald little men who marched past him in single file, paying no attention. He realized quickly that something about this was eerie beyond reason, but he did not know what, though the memory of the encounter would remain with him for the rest of his life. If it had been a hundred years ago and he had been passing down a lane in the west of Ireland, he would have been no less frightened, but at least he would have had a name for what he saw: the trooping fairies. Likewise, when another young Midwesterner encountered a mysterious dog that disappeared in front of his eyes, he recalled it for decades afterward as the strangest event of his life. Neither then nor later would he hear of “black

dogs,” the supernatural canines known in many folk traditions and the subject of numerous sighting reports.⁵⁴⁶

Even when the phenomenon is known in a general way as the focus of numerous sightings, witnesses are unlikely to know about its more subtle aspects. For example, popular lore about the footprints of hairy bipeds is influenced by casts associated with Bigfoot/Sasquatch of the Pacific Northwest. These casts are, as appearances suggest, of a giant primate; like all primates, these have five toes. Practically no one except the several hundred anomaly buffs who pay attention to such matters knows that hairy bipeds seen outside the Pacific Northwest usually leave zoologically absurd tracks that evince only three toes, and these are oddly fat and oversized. In the same way investigators of the UFO-abduction phenomenon find striking consistency not only in its overt features (as one would expect by now, considering the vast publicity such reports have generated in recent years) but also in its subtle, obscure details, some still unpublished.⁵⁴⁷

Western culture provides an immense number of models from which those claiming anomalous experience can draw; are all such experiences wholly imaginary? Yet anomalous events and appearances draw on a distinctly finite number of images and motifs. People of apparent sanity and evident sincerity who report close encounters of the third kind describe humanoid beings, not multi-tentacled extraterrestrial octopuses or giant arachnids. They report kangaroos in midwestern US states but not platypuses; others report black panthers but not woolly mammoths. Even where the most extreme anomalous claims are concerned, one hears reports of fairies, and even of merfolk and werewolves, but not of unicorns or vampires.⁵⁴⁸

There is, on the other hand, much to be said for skepticism — which need not be synonymous with anomaly-phobia. It does not require observers to form debunking committees and launch emotional crusades against heretical beliefs and unacceptable experiences. But a rational, balanced skepticism, one that is neither apologetic about its demand for persuasive evidence nor afraid to admit the limits of current knowledge, is to be preferred to mindless

credulity. And where extraordinary claims are concerned, there is a great deal to be skeptical about.⁵⁴⁹

As indicated earlier, even militant disbelievers have become reluctant to level hoax charges indiscriminately against persons who say they have had close encounters with unrecognized entities or phenomena. Nonetheless hoaxes do occur. Most are fairly clumsy affairs, but some are devilishly clever and aggravatingly difficult to crack. The most remarkable hoax in the history of ufology (the study of UFOs), for example, concerned a document that purported to be a top-secret briefing paper prepared for President-elect Eisenhower by a classified operation called Majestic-12, or MJ-12. MJ-12 supposedly consisted of a dozen high-ranking government officials and military officers who oversaw the deepest UFO secrets, including physical evidence. The hoaxer loaded the document with obscure, hard-to-find information that investigators later were able to verify, with much difficulty, in the course of archival research in Washington. Such findings, of course, were thought to give the document credibility. Eventually, after prolonged and furious debate, skeptics won the argument in undramatic fashion: they demonstrated that the dating formats and rank designations would not have been used in an authentic government briefing paper. Even today, however, a few diehards refuse to give up on the MJ-12 document, and the identity and motive of the hoaxer remain a mystery.⁵⁵⁰

Historically photographs or extraordinary anomalies are more likely than not to be bogus. Serious Bigfoot/Sasquatch researchers reject as inauthentic nearly all photographs and films said to depict the creature. Probably 95% of all "UFO" photos are of dubious provenance, and some of the most spectacular footage of the Loch Ness Monster is known or suspected to be fake. The debate about photographic evidence of these kinds of phenomena centers on a surprisingly small number of recorded images.⁵⁵¹

Sometimes, in fact, critics act as if the paucity of arguably authentic photographs amounts to evidence against the reality of these sorts of anomalies, but this is a singularly un-compelling objection when one considers that (1) most people do not walk

around with cameras at the ready; (2) nearly all anomalous encounters occur abruptly and occasion emotions ranging from deep shock to sheer terror; and (3) the duration of most such events can be measured in seconds. These are not conditions conducive to the creation of a big body of photographs. And that is why there are so few reputable pictures of ball lightning, a strange natural phenomenon whose reality most physicists and meteorologists no longer dispute.⁵⁵²

It is one of the perversities of anomalies research that the fuzzier the image, the more likely it represents something real, inasmuch as the circumstances that cause photographs to be rare are the same ones that are likely to cause them to be unclear. Pictures taken hastily by individuals with shaking hands do not produce sharp images, and hoaxers who seek attention or profit know that photographs like these will not get them anywhere. Fuzzy images offer such a feeble variety of evidence that witnesses who trumpet them are only asking for yet more ridicule to be heaped upon their heads.⁵⁵³

Some tales marketed as “true mysteries” began less as hoaxes than as jokes or science fiction — in other words, as tales that, though they may not have been intended to be taken seriously, took on lives of their own and over the decades reincarnated as records of events, that, it was assumed, someone somewhere had validated. Other “mysteries” arise from imaginative interpretations of events that, if unusual, are not so bizarre as they are made to seem. The Bermuda Triangle and cattle mutilations, two modern legends, disintegrated not long after competent investigators turned their attention to them, but not before the two notions had enthralled and frightened impressionable souls in the countless thousands. These sorts of pseudo-mysteries flourish in part, of course, because people are drawn to exotic novelties and, moreover, enjoy being scared in comfort and safety. Few people possess the specialized knowledge that would expose the foolishness of the assertions made by the mystery-mongers. It took concentrated research into US Naval, Coast Guard, and other nautical archives to uncover the prosaic events behind Triangle lore, and only veterinary pathologists could pronounce with certainty on the causes of the cattle deaths that fired

rumors of sinister “mutilations.” Beyond the hoaxes and the legends are genuine misperceptions and honest mistakes. No conscientious investigator embarks on his labors without considering these possibilities and pursuing them actively.⁵⁵⁴

A deeper reason for skepticism has to do with the nature of the more fantastic claims. Many reports attest to beings, creatures, and occurrences that, if established to be real, would shake the scientific community. Some would shake the foundations of consensus reality. In short, what is being alleged here is nothing to be taken lightly. The implications are enormous. Because the stakes are so high, caution is prudence. After all, one does not redefine the world on no more than the word — however sincere it may appear to be — of sailors and shore-dwellers who say they have sighted merfolk. No biological principle, or even conceivable biological principle, allows one to believe in beings or animals that are half fish and half human, or even in creatures that look as if they could be half fish and half human. Unsurprisingly, in our time, merfolk have virtually no defenders, even among anomalists.⁵⁵⁵

Neither do fairies have any supporters, though first-person sighting reports in no small number have been logged over the centuries. In a handful of cases these are preserved in affidavits sworn by presumably reputable and sober members of the clergy. No one collects these reports anymore except folklorists, who are interested in them because they represent survivals of older, traditional beliefs. As to their status as descriptions of real events, folklorists shrug and say this is a question for parapsychologists. Parapsychologists for their part say fairy sightings are of interest only to folklorists.⁵⁵⁶

Who can blame anybody here? Even to raise the question of fairy (or merfolk) sightings is to raise multitudes of eyebrows. Sightings of fairies and merfolk, on the other hand, typically are said to occur in settings where hallucinations tied to sleep paralysis are not an issue. The witnesses are usually individuals otherwise deemed sane and well, and consequently not susceptible to dramatic delusions. “In our society,” Graham Reed writes in *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience* (1988), “hallucinatory content is usually con-

cerned with the fears and conflicts which would be expected from people who are suffering from mental disorder or delirium due to physical health." A number of these sightings, moreover, involve multiple witnesses.⁵⁵⁷

That just about sums up the case for high-strangeness anomalies: credible persons reporting incredible things, and nothing but sincerity to show for it. This is not, in short, the stuff of a scientific revolution. Neither is it, however, occasion to rush into the vacuum with a naively reductionist explanation that renders the anomalous claim harmless by covering it with a "natural" cause pulled out of a hat. It is just as unwise to fill the explanatory vacuum with scientifically meaningless or overtly supernatural "theories" based on a host of unverifiable assumptions about the nature of reality.⁵⁵⁸

It ought to be clear, though, that the literature on anomalous phenomena (whether written by proponents or debunkers) shows it is everything but freakish. It is not known why honest individuals, in all times and places, claim to see things that all evidence and logic indicates do not and "cannot" exist. Nearly everybody who pays attention to such anomalous testimony gets himself worked into an intellectual and emotional knot over it. Human nature abhors an explanatory vacuum; thus in the rhetoric of the debate that has raged in one form or another over the centuries, a strange entity or beast gets transformed either into a conventional object or animal to which it bears no resemblance or into an intruder from some magical dimension.⁵⁵⁹

If neither explanation seems especially helpful, it is because the question has been framed wrongly. The question should not be, though it always is, "Do bizarre beasts and entities exist?" No sensible, all-encompassing answer is possible, and it is futile to pretend otherwise. The question really is, "Is it possible to have the experience of encountering bizarre beasts and entities?" And the answer is "yes."⁵⁶⁰

To respond affirmatively is only to acknowledge modestly the obvious, which is "weird stuff happens." This, however, concedes nothing about what all this weird stuff means. People "seeing"

fairies or merfolk can be granted without for a moment confirming that fairies or merfolk share human “reality” or dimensions of being. That such sightings are possible experiences can be acknowledged even though the actual dynamics of the experiences remain unknown for the time being. Therefore, science as currently constructed has little to offer in the way of elucidation, and occultism has only obfuscation. The nature of these experiences need not remain forever inexplicable. With the ever-accelerating accumulation of knowledge in all areas, sooner or later it will become possible to place these experiences in a rational perspective, either as heretofore unsuspected perceptual anomalies or as glimpses of an otherwise undetected larger reality. Whether the solution comes from the micro (subjective) or macro (objective) side of the existential ledger, it is sure to teach man something new.⁵⁶¹

Until then, these events should be regarded simply as curiosities that represent some of human experience’s more peculiar and unclassifiable aspects and about which it is difficult to say more. In other words, they should not be seen as the foundation of a new science or a new religion, and they ought not to threaten anyone who does not need to believe late-20th century science has accounted for all the interesting phenomena of mind and nature.⁵⁶²

Not all, or even most, anomalous claims are of such an extreme variety. On the low side of the strangeness scale, there exist ball lightning, eastern cougars, ghost lights, giant octopuses, ice falls, surviving thylacine (rare dog-like carnivorous marsupial mammals of Tasmania, having a striped back), and other things that, while undeniably intriguing mysteries, do not hint at earth-shaking revelations. Physicists, meteorologists, wildlife specialists, and marine biologists may solve these riddles one day in the near future. Newspapers, television, and radio will take notice for a few days, and the phenomena will then sink from popular view, to be revived occasionally on cable television’s ubiquitous nature documentaries.⁵⁶³

But if cryptozoologists were to produce a Bigfoot or a Mokelembembe (a sauropod dinosaur alleged to survive in the remote reaches of the Congo), the consequences for anthropology, paleontology, and evolutionary theory would be immense, if only because

their presence (while not *a priori* impossible) is so unexpected — not just by scientists but by everybody. It is hard to imagine anyone who would not be excited. On the other hand, once the serious research on these animals' physiology, diet, and behavior would have begun, popular interest would slacken, and in time Bigfoot and Mokele-mbembe would be just more fodder for nature documentaries. The same can be said of lake monsters and the like.⁵⁶⁴

There is no doubt that the discovery of an extraterrestrial presence on earth would have far more profound consequences. Unidentified flying objects are, to some, the major scientific mystery of the century and, to others, the century's most annoyingly persistent manifestation of mass credulity. UFOs are the most extraordinary claim short of those that defy consensus reality. Excepting the minority of astronomers of the “we-are-alone” school, who reject the concept of extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) altogether, most space scientists see visitation from other solar systems at least theoretically possible. Some of the more conservative ETI proponents have argued that the vast distances between stars would prevent travel between them, but this view is falling out of favor as other theorists have demonstrated mechanisms by which interstellar voyages could be effected in manageable periods of time.⁵⁶⁵

Thus the serious debate about UFOs — and much of the debate on both sides has been anything but serious — centers on two issues: the quality of the evidence and the likely nature, appearance, and behavior of extraterrestrial visitors. The first of these issues was memorably encapsulated in the words of one-time Project Blue Book head Edward J. Ruppelt in a memoir of his experiences, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (1956), “What constitutes proof? Does a UFO have to land at the River Entrance to the Pentagon, near the Joint Chiefs of Staff offices? Or is it proof when a ground radar station detects a UFO, sends a jet to intercept it, the jet pilot sees it, and locks on with his radar, only to have the UFO streak away at a phenomenal speed?” In his official capacity Ruppelt had investigated a number of the latter kinds of reports, and since the 1950s many comparable ones have been recorded. Most have resisted explanation even after intense study.⁵⁶⁶

Cases like these, as well as others, will eventually settle the UFO question. It is clear that no amount of eyewitness or “anecdotal” testimony — which by now exists in staggering quantities — is going to persuade those in position to render the judgements to which all scientists will adhere. And it will probably take a new generation of elite scientists who, not having staked their positions in concrete, will be able to take not only a fresh look but the vital step of seeing to it that funding for real scientific inquiry is at last made available for UFO research.⁵⁶⁷

Nonetheless, eyewitness testimony is what has always gripped popular attention, for understandable reasons. As stories go, it is hard to beat tales of grotesque, gray-skinned humanoids who abduct people and do odd things to their bodies inside UFOs. This characterization of them is not intended to poke fun at such reports, some of which are genuinely puzzling, nor at the real trauma some “abductees” suffer. But abduction reports, like other high-strangeness narratives, make the most extraordinary sorts of claims in support of which they produce only circumstantial evidence. Such evidence, which never rises above the consistent-with-the-hypothesis variety, ranges from unaccounted-for marks on abductees’ bodies to patterns in the data that appear explainable neither by chance nor by cultural contamination. Few knowledgeable investigators, whether ufologists or mental-health professionals, doubt that the abduction phenomenon is an enigma; neither would many argue that the evidence so far available is sufficient to do anything more than keep the question open.⁵⁶⁸

Abductions are just one variety of a class of reports the late astronomer and ufologist J. Allen Hynek called “close encounters of the third kind.” Such reports first surfaced in press accounts in the Summer of 1947, and eventually forced themselves on reluctant investigators who felt discomfited by these fantastic, even absurd-sounding accounts. In due course it became evident that witnesses to humanoids were for the most part no different from witnesses to safely distant nocturnal lights or daylight discs. Thus, where anecdotal reports were concerned, there was no *prima facie* reason to take the former any less seriously than the latter.⁵⁶⁹

Furthermore, witnesses in the thousands, from bus drivers to nuclear physicists, were insisting that the “flying saucers” they saw looked like craft (structured vehicles built by somebody); that these crafts’ performance characteristics indicated a technology far in advance of anything known on earth; and that these objects had windows, presumably so that somebody inside could look out. In short, if appearances were to be believed, these were extraterrestrial spacecraft with occupants.⁵⁷⁰

And what of those occupants? In the sighting reports investigators deemed credible, they were, with practically no exceptions to speak of, humanoid in appearance — as indeed intelligent, technology-building extraterrestrials would almost certainly be. This is a conclusion shared by anti- and pro-UFO scientists alike. For example, skeptic John L. Cast writes in *Paradigms Lost: Tackling the Unanswered Mysteries of Modern Science* (1989),

...bilateralism and the presence of large ganglia of nerves near the front of the body and close to the primary sense organs are essential characteristics of intelligent creatures in the convergent evolution scheme of things... one comes up with an ETI whose physical forms would be remarkably humanoid; in fact, remarkably like the kinds of forms reported by people who are abducted by the occupants of UFOs.⁵⁷¹

And proponent Michael D. Swords, developing a similar argument but in much greater detail, contends that viewed in the context of current astronomical knowledge and evolutionary theory, ufology’s extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH), including witnesses’ reports of humanoids, is “eminently defensible and scientifically respectable.”⁵⁷²

Seen in this light, the UFO phenomenon looks like something science can deal with. Even those who insist that eyewitness testimony alone is insufficient to validate so fantastic a notion as extraterrestrial visitation cannot fail to wonder why aliens have a humanoid shape, given the array of alien forms witnesses could have borrowed from popular culture. Beyond this suggestive testi-

mony is intriguingly hard evidence (radar trackings, soil samples from landing sites, photographs, and films) of a sort consistent with the hypothesis of anomalous, technologically advanced craft in the earth's atmosphere. One does not have to be a crackpot to deem it at least possible that somebody from somewhere far away may be calling on us.⁵⁷³

If this seems sensible enough, be advised that this is not the end of it. Some phenomena associated with UFOs move beyond the edge of reality and into a void of unreasonableness and surreality. Men in black — the not-quite-human, not entirely coherent agents who allegedly threaten some UFO witnesses and investigators, and who navigate the landscape of the twilight zone in shiny black Cadillacs — seem more demonological than ufological, and about as easy to believe in as fairies and merfolk.⁵⁷⁴

There is also what British ufologist Jenny Randles has called the “Oz factor,” recorded in a surprising number of UFO-sighting accounts; according to Randles, it is the “sensation of being isolated, or transported from the real world into a different environmental framework... where reality is slightly different.” For example, a witness may observe a spectacular UFO display on a well-traveled highway during rush hour and note the utter absence of other traffic. In at least one instance — of particular interest because the percipient was himself an academic folklorist (who later recounted the incident in a *Journal of American Folklore* paper in which he gave himself a pseudonym and treated the event as if it had happened to someone else) — a man in black appeared to a student in a university library, uttered a short message about flying saucers, then walked away and seemed to disappear mysteriously. The student was perplexed to find the library inexplicably deserted.⁵⁷⁵

Likewise cryptozoologists deal with questions that seem straightforward enough but become complicated by unwelcome intrusions of high-strangeness manifestations. Most investigators of Loch Ness' monsters, for example, concentrate on reports — and there are many — of creatures that could be real animals, even if ones usually thought extinct such as plesiosaurs and zeuglodons. They pay as little attention as possible to reported sightings (usually

on land) of things that look like aquatic camels, enormous crocodiles, mutated hippopotamuses, great salamanders, or — in one instance — a giant frog. Confronted with such reports, most of them related by individuals seemingly no less sane or sincere than those whose accounts of encounters with less exotic specimens are revered by Ness proponents, cryptozoologists resort to the same desperate rationalizations they complain about in their critics. Even the usually sensible Roy P. Mackal dismissed one bizarre land sighting as an encounter with what he speculated as a “congenitally deformed specimen of the highland cattle common in the area.”⁵⁷⁶

Scientific proponents of the Northwest’s Bigfoot/Sasquatch rarely discuss or even acknowledge hairy-biped reports in Eastern and midwestern states of the US and provinces of Canada. The presence of such creatures in these places cannot be defended on biological or logical grounds. Even worse, some aspects of their appearance verge on the apparitional, and in a few instances hint at an association with UFOs. A growing number of wildlife biologists believe, not unreasonably, that cougars, once thought extinct everywhere east of the Mississippi River except in the Florida Everglades, have re-established a foothold in the northeastern wilds of the United States. They do not know what to do with the many hundreds, possibly thousands, of reports of “black panthers” and comparably anomalous felines (including maned African lions) all across the continent.⁵⁷⁷

Not uncommonly, in other words, what is thought of as a single anomalous phenomenon may be two phenomena, one merely fantastic, the other utterly incredible. One seems potentially explainable, more or less, by current (or near-future) science; the other is absurd or inexplicable, or both. This peculiar duality is apparent even in such relatively sedate manifestations of nature as ball lightning. Small luminous spheres that in other contexts would be labeled ball lightning demonstrate, in the testimonies of not a few witnesses, a bewildering purposefulness and intelligence. In his *Deviant Science* (1984), sociologist of science James McClenon recounts an interview with a man who swore he had seen a small ball of light enter his bedroom after the closed window magically rose.

After sailing about the house, it departed via the front door, which obligingly opened to permit it to escape.⁵⁷⁸

What all this means is, of course, impossible to say, though it is certain that this small consideration will stop no committed debunker or true believer from saying it anyway. The temptations to reductionism (the witness was dreaming it) or occultism (it was a paranormal being from the etheric realm) are hard to resist. Again, human nature abhors an explanatory vacuum. Real understanding, on the other hand, demands intellectual modesty and patience, not to mention a huge tolerance for ambiguity. Where the most extreme sorts of claims — excepting those that are demonstrably bogus or otherwise suspect, naturally — are concerned, there is no requirement to either believe or disbelieve, and absolutely nothing calls for investigators to pursue explanations that defy reason and experience.⁵⁷⁹

Common decency and common sense compel listeners to be courteous to witnesses and to hear them out. The latter, after all, were there; the former were not. If a reasonable, non-extraordinary explanation for what the witnesses say they have seen can be provided, then fine. If not, the witnesses need not be insulted by others reinventing their sightings so as to ridicule them or call them, without evidence to the effect, liars. Yet the sincerest testimony to the most bizarre event or entity, even if it was accurately rendered, is not enough to remake the world on its own, in the absence of other, more compelling evidence. On sightings of merfolk, fairies, hairy bipeds, aquatic camels, Mothman, thunderbirds, and the rest, all that can be said is that these comprise some people's experience of the world.⁵⁸⁰

Science will try to explain what it can, and the more science learns, the more it will be able to explain. If there are large, uncataloged animals living in the earth's oceans and lakes, if Gigantopithecus lives on in the Northwestern wilderness of the Americas, if extraterrestrial visitors are streaking through the earth's air space, or if sauropods and thylacines are not really extinct, they will ultimately be known, once the appropriate attention and resources are committed to answering these questions. Presumably the answers will come in the form of actual specimens.⁵⁸¹

But where high-strangeness, anomalous claims are concerned, probably no amount of funding and expertise will do much more than produce still more sighting reports. Funding will permit analyses of the few (often literal) threads of physical evidence (hairy-biped hair, for example), with results that will either disappoint (it was dog hair) or frustrate (sort of like dog hair but also sort of like human hair, yet not quite either). Psychologists who are participating in the investigation will develop psychological profiles of the witnesses and will find their subjects to be essentially indistinguishable from non-witnesses; that is to say, ordinary people reporting extraordinary experiences — something already well-known. Or yet in other words, the end of the investigation leads back to its beginning. Present knowledge is an unhelpful guide through the thickets of extreme anomalous experience.⁵⁸²

That makes such experience no less interesting, of course. The contrary, in fact. Whether taken as wonderfully strange stories, the makings of a future science, or intimations of hidden dimensions of matter or spirit, these accounts indicate that the possibilities of experience are far more varied than people are led to believe. No amount of rationalization can alter the simple truth that, whatever their ultimate nature, all sorts of incredibly odd things can be experienced. If that fact does nothing else, it should alert us to the folly of ridicule. After all, if sane and sincere Joe Smith can encounter something weird, presumably so can you and I. If it happened to us, we would expect a courteous reception and be outraged if we got anything else — as we almost certainly would.⁵⁸³

“Weird stuff” is just a verbal expression that the mind puts out whenever there is no rational explanation. People who experience non-rational events should be heard out. And why not? Other approaches, after all, have proven unhelpful and have done nothing but conceal, thinly, man’s ignorance. A radically objective approach that respects the testimony deserving of respect, even when it speaks of the incredible, is all that is left to open-minded people. This testimony may or may not impart extraordinary truths about the world, but it does recount something about the peculiar things people can experience in the world.⁵⁸⁴

The causes, not the occurrences, ought ultimately to comprise the focus of investigations and debates. It seems futile by now to argue that all anomalous experiences must have demonstrable conventional causes; yet it is also unwise to extrapolate too broadly from such experiences, which may not mean at all what they appear to mean. What is experienced anomalously may not “exist” in the literal sense in which that verb is customarily used.⁵⁸⁵

Anomalies of the highest strangeness dwell in a twilight zone of ambiguity. “Seeing” one does not necessarily mean that the anomaly lives on in the world when it is not briefly occupying the witness’ vision and scaring the daylights out of him. Unbelievable things can be experienced, but those experiences may divulge nothing about the anomalous phenomena except that they can be experienced. If someone “saw” a mermaid or a werewolf, however impressive the experience may have been, then the inference that mermaids and werewolves are “real” cannot be drawn for all people, especially in the absence of more evidence. However, to be certain that mermaids and werewolves are not real merely removes one explanation (that mermaids and werewolves live in the world) from consideration while failing to put another in its place.⁵⁸⁶

Here at the fringes of reason and experience, we can only marvel at how little we understand about some kinds of human experiences. Whether their causes, when at last understood, turn out to be profound or trivial, these experiences are undeniably strange. Just as undeniably, they remind us what a mystery this world is, and what mysteries we ourselves are.⁵⁸⁷

This long journey into the trial-and-error mind of the West delivers a sense of where they, or at least some of them, stand on the subject of the *ghayb* and the jinn. At this point, consider what is known about the jinn from Islamic sources of judicious and trustworthy information. Firstly, insofar as Iblīs (the name of Satan before he disobeyed His Lord) and his progeny are concerned, the Qur’an and the Sunnah, which are the only reliable references on the subject, indicate that the jinn have the potential for demonic conduct and evil behavior. Similarly, human beings have a share of this potential.

Secondly, the jinn are created out of a form of fire. They have the ability to live on earth, in the earth, and beyond the earth, but compared to the angels, they are frail and weak. Their mobility and ability to change locations far exceeds the speed of human beings to accomplish the same. Among them are their committed and sincere adherents to Allah (ﷻ) as well as their demons and wicked types. The jinn have the capacity to perceive, sense, and see humans while the opposite is not the case; however this is not unique, as there are forms of life capable of sensing man while he is unable to sense them (such as angels and demons). In a manner still unknown to man, the demonic jinn are capable of acting upon man's internal feelings and thoughts; they can exert a form of influence upon some human beings, and thereby affect human behavior.

But these evil jinn cannot have any influence upon conscientious and committed Muslims. Though Satan tries to make inroads into the Muslim psychology, when Allah is in the mind and heart, then there is no place for his leverage. Conversely, omitting Allah from human consciousness is what makes room for satanic suggestions. A committed Muslim's heightened consciousness of Allah (*taqwá*) is the most powerful antidote against the strategy of Satan. On the Day of Accountability the jinn will stand for judgement just like human beings. Depending on the extent of merit or demerit, each of them will be compensated either with paradise or the fire.

This *āyah* alerts the committed Muslims to the fact that every prophet has indeed concerned himself with enemies from both species: jinn and humans. Had it been Allah's will, these jinn would not have been able to do any damage or pose a shred of danger to humans. Allah (ﷻ) could easily neutralize or pacify them, incapacitate them if they are hostile toward His prophets, and He could even force them to commit to Him and obey Him — should that be His will. But He left them a degree of freedom to choose their course of action vis-à-vis the prophets. Thus, they are capable of causing some harm to prophets and injury to committed Muslims. Looking at it from a different point of view, the dissembling behavior of the evil jinn and their human allies trans-

lates into a strength-building activity for committed Muslims, not physical strength per se but that which comes from endurance and fortitude, **“And had Allah willed it [their powerlessness to wreak havoc] they would be unable to do harm.”**

What should be understood from all this is that all those elites, individuals, power-mongers, self-centered maniacs, and arrogant figures who oppose with hostility and malice Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) and their followers are *shayātīn* (devils and demons). They have encampments in both the domains of jinn and *ins* (humans). Even though these demonic counterparts may be misleading each other, they do not fail in their attempts to launch hostilities against prophets and committed Muslims. These demonic spirits and evil persons are incapable of doing anything due to who they are or to whatever endowments they have been given in the form of ability or the like. If and when they express hatred and hostility to the prophets and their successors, they do so because of the latitude of freedom that Allah (ﷻ) has placed in the nature of life and existence that all created beings share. And if Allah’s sincere servants are subjected to these acts of enmity and violence, it is because Allah intends to toughen them, to temper their character, so that they can qualify to discharge the responsibilities of their leading position.

“But they could not do this unless your Sustainer had so willed...” This dynamic of freedom of choice and standing up for the truth on principle is meant to bring out the true character of Allah’s enemies and to build up the true character of His patrons. Without this polarization, to differentiate between who is true to Allah (ﷻ) and who is not would be impossible. If committed Muslims stay their principled course with Allah, they will defeat and vanquish these subtle and not-so-subtle enemies. When they are with Allah, they are by definition and by perseverance superior to whatever enemies emerge from time to time. So, strategically, the committed Muslims should give them enough rope to hang themselves, **“Leave them and their fabrications.”** It would be a waste of time for the committed Muslims, who have more urgent matters to attend, to engage them as their arguments are endless; therefore,

these enemies should just be left for Allah to round up when the time comes — a time when there will be no escape for them.

In this tug of war between the satanic crisscrossing of species there will be a rifferaff effect; that is to say there will be “happy-go-lucky” types who will be duped by elaborate fabrications and tricked by fancy verbalizations,

So that the hearts of those who are not committed to the final life begin to listen to such fabrications, and so that they may try to satisfy [these false powers] and so that they may end up committing what they will commit [of crimes] (6:113)⁵⁸⁸

These are the ones who are world-centered and earth-obsessed. They see how satanic powers appear to have the upper hand in this worldly life. They see how the prophets and their backers are persecuted and humiliated, and how there is a flamboyant nexus of words, propaganda, and publicity against which these poor prophets and their intimates do not stand a chance (at least in the view of these types). As a result these who are satisfied with nothing less than the validation of the dominant power culture fall into the trap of the satanic network of jinn and man. Thinking that the temporal powers always have the upper hand, this rifferaff begins sliding down the slippery slope of sins, in the end subordinating itself unreservedly to Satan.

All this is part of life because Allah (ﷻ) has given intelligent species the freedom to choose between what is right and what is wrong, to adhere to the truth even if there are sacrifices or to adhere to falsehood as it is attended by “profits.” The pattern of the life of eternity shall be determined by these positions in this world. Thus a person who goes to Paradise will have worked for it and a person who goes to the Fire will have incurred it.

Public Information as a Means of Man's Control over Man

Many people in this world are caught up in a tortuous labyrinth of imagery and deceived by an ever-exploitative propaganda, **“They [the demonic jinn and ins] infer to themselves the upshot of illusory statements.”** This portion of the *āyah* requires an extended explanation. People ascertain images of the world from their newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books, movies, and the internet. The mass media become the authority at any given moment for what is true and what is false, what is reality and what is fantasy, what is important and what is trivial. There is no greater force in shaping the public mind; even brute force triumphs only by creating an accepting attitude toward the brutes.

Authorities have always recognized that to control the public they must control information. The initial possessor of news and ideas has political power — the power to disclose or conceal, to announce some parts and not others, to hold back until opportunistic moments, and to predetermine the interpretation of what is revealed. Leaders of democracies no less than medicine men, shamans, kings, and dictators are jealous of their power over ideas, as eager to control information as they are to control armies.⁵⁸⁹

Controlled information has a morbid history. It is not morbid solely because it violates the notion of democracy, though it does that, but rather because it is usually wrong. Unchallenged information is inherently flawed. If it is in error to begin with, it is not open to correction. If it is correct at the time, it will soon be obsolete. If it changes without uninhibited response from the real world, it becomes detached from the real world. For a realistic picture of society there is no such thing as a central selfish authority.⁵⁹⁰

But the righteousness of power is irresistible. Every authority figure in the Western world once “knew” for certain that the world was flat and silenced anyone who pointed out the error. The authorities “knew” the Earth was the center of the universe and constructed ill-fated philosophies based on the illusion. When the bubonic plague decimated the population of Europe, the authorities burned not guilty rats but guiltless “witches.” For 2,000 years of Western history the best doctors treated fevers by draining the pa-

tients' blood and kindly killed more human beings than the most murderous cannon. These authorities were wrong. Their errors created intellectual sterility and immeasurable human misery. But they were not wrong because they were always unintelligent or evil. They were wrong and they remained wrong because their information, which they sincerely believed, was not effectively challenged by open and competitive ideas.⁵⁹¹

The Age of European Enlightenment created a new kind of society. It rejected dictators and kings. It celebrated democracy and individual freedom. It acknowledged that the popular consent of the governed is meaningless unless the consent is informed consent. Controlled information has survived into the 21st century's grim parade of dictatorships, but these dictatorships have been the enemies of people and they have ultimately failed.⁵⁹²

Modern technology and American economics have quietly created a new kind of central authority over information: the national and transnational corporation. By the 1980s, all major American media — newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, books, and movies — were controlled by 50 giant corporations. These corporations were interlocked in common financial interest with other massive industries and with a few dominant international banks.⁵⁹³

There are other media voices outside the control of the dominant 50 corporations. Most are small and localized, and many still disappear as they are acquired by the giants. The small voices, as always, are an important, saving remnant of diversity. But their diminutive input tends to be drowned out by the controlled thunder of the mass-media power of what once was a "great society."⁵⁹⁴

Modern technology and social organization have intensified the problems of centralized control of information. In an earlier age citizen talked to citizen about public policies that affected them correspondingly. Each community could gather in a hall or church to decide its own fate. Deciding its fate was real because in older, agricultural societies each community came close to self-sufficiency and remote events had marginal meaning. That method of politics disappeared long ago. In place of the small towns are huge urban

complexes where citizens do not know other members of the community. No town hall or church could possibly hold all the voters. Each citizen's fate is shaped by powerful forces in distant places. The individual now depends on great machines of information and imagery that inform and instruct. The modern systems of news, information, and popular culture are not marginal artifacts of technology. They shape the consensus of society.⁵⁹⁵

It is a truism among political scientists that while it is not possible for the media to tell the population what to think, they do tell the public what to think about. What is reported enters the public agenda. What is not reported may not be lost forever, but it may be lost at a time when it is most needed. More than any other single private source, and often more than any governmental source, the dominant media corporations can set the national agenda.⁵⁹⁶

The size of the dominant media corporations makes them participants in the world of international finance. Most are traded on the stock market, under pressure to compete with the most speculative investments around the world. Now, for the first time in the history of American journalism, news and public information have been integrated formally into the highest levels of financial and non-journalistic corporate control. Conflicts of interest between the public's need for information and corporate desires for "positive" information have vastly increased.⁵⁹⁷

The last half-century has experienced an unrelieved degradation of the mass media. The picture on the screen is technologically crystal clear but the content is informatively poor. The mega-corporations in control of most of the media differ in policies and practices of competition. Their subsidiaries' products vary in quality: some are good, some are mediocre, and many are wretched. The corporations are led by men and women who differ in personality and much less in values. In the massive output of these mega-corporations there is scant difference in the analyses of ideas, presentation of entertainment, or display of stories, including information that may be perceived as being critical of giant corporations.⁵⁹⁸

The problem has become one of universal evil among the corporations and their leaders. Constant suppression and close

monitoring of the content of their media companies has progressively become general practice. No longer is there a profusion of a rich mixture of news and ideas. There are limits that should not exist in populist societies, limits that are peculiar to a private enterprise media. The limits are felt on open discussion of the system that has nurtured collusion and monopoly in corporate life and of other values that have been enshrined under the label of “free enterprise.” Many of the corporations claim to allow untrammelled freedom to the journalists, producers, and writers they employ. That may have been relatively true in the distant past, but not any longer; when the most sensitive economic interests are at stake, the parent corporations seldom refrain from using their power over public information.⁵⁹⁹

Media power is political power. The formal American political system is designed as though in response to Lord Acton’s aphorism, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Media power is no exception. When as little as 50 men and women, chiefs of their corporations, control more than 75% of the information and ideas that reach over 300 million Americans, it is time for Americans to re-examine the institutions from which they receive their daily picture of the world — that is, those private corporations who are providing a public service without being held accountable by the checks and balances that apply to elected representatives and public institutions,⁶⁰⁰ **“...[corporations] intimate and hiss to each other cosmetic statements for [purposes of] vanity.”**

In this wider scope of things it is not the controllers of information, the image molders, and the corporate executives along with their governmental institutions and military establishments that will decide this whole affair. It is Allah (ﷻ) who will decide it. As much as the media-moguls and their corporate and governmental elites want people to think they have things under control, they do not have anything under control. On their watch things are going from bad to worse and conditions are tumbling from insecure to terrorized. Not only are these political and financial deities ruining societies, they are also tampering with the God-given proportionality in nature, life, and existence. They are

doomed by the will of Allah's servants and by the nature of things, **“And had Allah willed it they would not have gone this far in doing what they are doing; so leave them to contrive what they have been doing [for some time now].”** And the consequences will be devastating, as they cannot escape their fate.

The Trivial and the Significant: Both Come from God

The thrust of *Sūrah al-An'ām* is to clarify and delineate the meaning of divinity as contrasted with the meaning of humanity. Over the ages, humanity has claimed a portion of divinity in the grey area of laws, authority, legal systems, and social regulations. Man's intrusion into this domain has come to adversely impact even what he eats and consumes, not to mention the overtly social practices that have become traditions and customs. Allah (ﷻ) brings this to man's attention at the end of the *sūrah*,

So, why do you not eat [meat] over which Allah's name has been invoked, if you are truly convinced of His *āyāt*? And why should you not eat of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced, seeing that He has so clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you [to eat] unless you are compelled [to do so]?

But, behold, [it is precisely in such matters that] many people lead others astray by their own errant views, without [having any real] knowledge. Verily, your Sustainer is fully aware of those who transgress the bounds of what is right.

But abstain from sinning, be it open or in secret — for, behold, those who commit sins shall be requited for all they have earned. Hence, eat not of that over which Allah's name has not been pronounced: for this would be sinful conduct indeed. And, verily, demons speak softly to those who have made them their own superiors that they should involve you in argument [as to what is and what is not a sin]; and if you pay heed to them, lo! you will become [like] those who ascribe divinity/authority to other beings or forces beside Allah (6:118–121).

And out of whatever He has created of the fruits of the field and the cattle, they assign unto Allah a portion,

saying, “This belongs to Allah” — or so they [falsely] claim — “and this is for those beings who, we are convinced, have a share in Allah’s divinity/authority.” But that which is assigned to the beings associated in their minds with Allah does not bring [them] closer to Allah — whereas that which is assigned to Allah brings [them but] closer to those beings to whom they ascribe a share in His divinity/authority. Bad, indeed, is their judgement!

And, likewise, their belief in beings or powers that are supposed to have a share in Allah’s divinity/authority makes [even] the slaying of their children seem goodly to many of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Allah, thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith. Yet, unless Allah had so willed, they would not be doing all this: stand, therefore, aloof from them and all their false imagery!

And they say, “Such-and-such cattle and fruits of the field are sacred; none may eat thereof save those whom we will [to do so]” — so they [falsely] claim; and [they declare that] it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain kinds of cattle; and there are cattle over which they do not pronounce Allah’s name, falsely attributing [the origin of these customs] to Him. [But] He will requite them for all their false imagery. And they say, “All that is in the wombs of such-and-such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our women; but if it be stillborn, then both may have their share thereof.” [Allah] will requite them for all that they [falsely] attribute [to Him]: behold, He is wise, all-knowing.

Lost, indeed, are those who, in their weak-minded ignorance, slay their children and declare as forbidden that which Allah has provided for them as sustenance, falsely ascribing [such prohibitions] to Allah: they have gone astray and have not found the right path (6:136–140).

The critically defining issue between divinity and humanity has always been *authority*, the power to exercise commanding influence or dominating control in social life. And this divine power of Allah (ﷻ) stretches all the way into what some people may consider to be “petty” or strictly “personal” issues, such as what people should eat, how they perceive “meat,” or vows they may make. All these are to be considered in light of man’s relationship with Allah as authority; and if man fails to do so, then he fails Him as his Authority. Who, other than Allah, can advise man on such “petty” or “personal” issues? If man were to scarcely cede such seemingly “insignificant” issues to Allah’s temporal rivals, then he would be wrongly elevating those who are not God into positions of control or influence. No human being has any right to assume this position, even if the overwhelming majority of the population endorses him.

The authentic Qur’an does not leave this often evaded issue alone. That is because man as ruler, conqueror, tormentor, and oppressor has managed throughout the eons to obfuscate and fudge this issue of authority until it no longer taps or begs man’s attention. In other words, what goes into his stomach as food is conditioned or stipulated by what goes into his mind as ideas and into his societies as regulations.

This straightforward focus on the indivisibility of Allah’s authority introduces what some people consider to be trivial, that is, what they eat. Fallen souls out there will intimate that God could not possibly be interested in their eating habits. Considering the full spectrum of human daily activity, a good portion of it is dedicated to eating and sleeping. So the real question is: why would not He be interested? Allah’s care and love for man precludes Him from allowing people to unknowingly harm themselves, their families, and their societies by their ingesting baleful food and drink. He does not want human beings to fall in with a societal flow and a frame of reference that imposes a “standard” of right and wrong disconnected from God’s guidance. This breakaway mentality and its free-living lifestyle belittles God and demeans His authority, dignity, and reputation.

In a sense, such an attitude is another facet of *shirk*. This piece of the Qur'anic writ divulges the nature of *kufr* and the nature of *imān*, as if to comment on what is legal and what is not. As the *āyāt* deal with the motivations of the *kāfirs* who try to countermand the truth about Allah's authority and power, the committed Muslims begin to develop a sense of what is right and what is wrong, what is healthy and what is morbid, what is lawful and what is unlawful, and what is sanctioned and what is not,

And it is in this way that We cause the great ones in every land to become its [greatest] evildoers, there to weave their schemes: yet it is only against themselves that they scheme — and they perceive it not. And whenever a [divine] message comes to them, they say, “We shall not commit ourselves unless we are given the like of what Allah’s apostles were given!” [But] Allah knows best upon whom to bestow His message. Abasement in the sight of Allah will befall those who have become guilty of evildoing, and severe suffering for all the schemes they were wont to weave (6:123–124).

The Qur'anic discussion here heightens the committed Muslims' appreciation of reality as it apprises them of the fact that people, whether they move in the right or wrong direction in life, conduct their activities within a domain disposed to Allah's social law. Both those who are in the right and those who are in the wrong are still in a relationship of regulation or constraint with Allah (ﷻ). Whatever they do is managed by His supervision and control,

And whomever Allah wants to guide, He opens up his embrace for Islam. And whomever He wants to deflect, He renders his bosom tense and compressed as if he were climbing [and breathing] at high altitudes in the sky. In this way, Allah causes those who are not committed to Him to become toxic (6:125).

Once this mental image is clear and once the psychological differences are delineated, the fog from the course ahead is also lifted,

And this is the pathway of your Sustainer — a straight one; We have detailed Our power presence for folks who reminisce [with a conscience]. Theirs is a domain of peace in the presence of their Lord; He is their overriding authority in reference to what they were doing [in the worldly life] (6:126–127).

The *āyāt* of this section begin the concluding part of *Sūrah al-An‘ām*. All the previous lessons were, in a sense, supportive structures for the points to be made in the following segments. In matters pertaining to man’s sustenance, survival, and daily life, who should tell him what is edible and lawful and what is not? Should Allah’s name be invoked upon the meat consumed by man? These questions gain a particular importance as they induce man to decide who his authority will be on such matters. Is it going to be Allah (ﷻ), the Creator and the Annihilator of life, or is it going to be created human beings who themselves will expire in a short time? The issue of “authority” is presented in such a way that it gives importance to where man spends the bulk of his time: at home. Human power structures generally trivialize this aspect of man’s existence, trying to put emphasis on his “job” and productive capacities rather than on his responsibilities. Allah, on the other hand, reaches him in the privacy of his home, in the close quarters of his family, in the recipes of his kitchen, and on the spread of his dinner table. Who is going to authoritatively decide what man can and should consume? Whoever that authority turns out to be will ultimately be his deity and divinity.

- (6:114) [Say, O Prophet], “Am I, then to look unto anyone but Allah for judgement [as to what is right and wrong], when it is He who has bestowed upon you from on high this divine Writ, clearly spelling out the truth?” And those to whom We have vouchsafed revelation aforetime know that

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا
 وَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا
 تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا
 مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ
 فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ
 هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ
 أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 بِعَايَتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ
 وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا
 لَيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾
 وَذَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْأَيْمَنِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْأَيْمَ سَيَجْزَوْنَ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ
 وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَوْلِيَاءِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّلُوكُمْ
 وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ أَوْ مِنْ كَانَ مِيتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا
 لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ

مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ
 جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُّجْرِمِيهَا لِيَمَّكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا
 يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ
 قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ
 يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ
 يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا
 حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ
 عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَضَّلْنَا
 الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

this one, too, has been bestowed from on high, step by step, by your Sustainer. Be not, then, among the doubters —

- (6:115) For, truly and justly has your Sustainer's promise been fulfilled. There is no power that could alter [the fulfillment of] His promises: and he alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

- (6:116) Now if you pay heed to the majority of those [who live] on earth, they will but lead you astray from the path of Allah: they follow but [other people's] conjectures, and they themselves do nothing but guess.
- (6:117) Verily, your Sustainer knows best who strays from His path, and He knows best who are the right-guided.
- (6:118) So, why do you not eat [animal flesh] over which Allah's name has been invoked, if you are truly convinced of His *āyāt*?
- (6:119) And why should you not eat of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced, seeing that He has so clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you [to eat] — unless you are compelled [to do so]? But behold, [it is precisely in such matters that] many people lead others astray by their own errant views, without [having any real] knowledge. Verily, your Sustainer is fully aware of those who transgress the bounds of what is right.
- (6:120) But abstain from sinning, be it open or secret — for, behold, those who commit sins shall be requited for all that they have earned.
- (6:121) Hence, eat not of that over which Allah's name has not been pronounced: for this would be sinful conduct indeed. And, verily, the demons whisper to those who have made them their own [authorities] that they should involve you in argument [as to what is and what is not a sin]; and if you pay heed to them, lo! you will become [like] those who ascribe divinity/authority to other beings or forces beside Allah.
- (6:122) Is, then, He who was dead [in spirit] and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light whereby he might see his way among men — [is then he] like one [who is lost] in darkness deep, out of which he cannot emerge? [But] thus it is: goodly seem all their own doings to those who deny the truth.
- (6:123) And it is in this way that We cause the great ones in every land to become its [greatest] evildoers, there to

- weave their schemes: yet it is only against themselves that they scheme — and they perceive it not.
- (6:124) And whenever a [divine] message comes to them, they say, “We shall not commit ourselves unless we are given the like of what Allah’s apostles were given!” [But] Allah knows best upon whom to bestow His message. Abasement in the sight of Allah will befall those who have become guilty of evildoing, and suffering severe for all the schemes they were wont to weave.
 - (6:125) And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, his bosom He opens wide with willingness toward self-surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his bosom He causes to be tight and constricted, as if he were climbing unto the skies: it is thus that Allah inflicts horror upon those who will not commit themselves [to Him].
 - (6:126) And undeviating is this your Sustainer’s way. Clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages to people who [are willing to] take them to heart!
 - (6:127) Theirs shall be an abode of peace with their Sustainer; and He shall be near to them in result of what they have been doing (al-An‘ām:114–127).

The discourse begins by stating the obvious: authority belongs to Allah (ﷻ) in whatever human beings do. It would follow that Allah is the authority on what is edible and what is not, and this would include meat products. In this realm, self-appointed human authorities — the *mushriks* — have historically been quite adept at staking a claim on what nutriments should qualify as food and drink. Appropriately the lesson begins with the words,

Is there someone besides Allah whom I should seek to be my arbiter, when it is He who has conferred upon you from on high this Book in detail? And those to whom We have vouchsafed revelation know that this [Book] has been conferred from on high from your Sustainer in truth [and accuracy]. Be not, then, among

the skeptics. For, truly and justly has your Sustainer's promise been fulfilled. There is no power that could alter [the fulfillment of] His promises: and He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. And if you were to obey most people on earth they would lead you far from Allah's path; they follow mere conjecture, and they only but hypothesize. Certainly, your Sustainer knows he who has deviated from His path, and He is most familiar with those who are guided (6:114–117).

Altogether, this is indicative of whether people become committed to Allah (ﷻ) or to some other authority, which, in other words, is a matter of *imān* or *kufr*.

Laws that Exclude God Sacrifice Justice and Security

Am I to seek an arbiter besides Allah? And it is He who has revealed to you the holy Writ in detail; and those who received earlier scripture know that it has been conferred from on high from your Sustainer in all manner of the truth. Be not, then, of the skeptics (6:114).

The question infers abjuration by the Prophet's words. He forswears having any arbiter second to Allah (ﷻ) in any affair or issue whatsoever. The first sentence underscores the authority and rule of Allah. No one — absolutely no one — can be what Allah is: man's authority, reference, and arbiter, **“Am I to seek in addition to Allah an arbiter?”**

Allah (ﷻ) did not leave holes and gaps in the overall program of life and existence so that man would have to go about looking for answers from another authority or power, **“...when it is He who has presented upon you from on high this divine Writ, clearly detailing the truth.”** This divine Scripture, the Qur'an, was revealed so that people would honor the standards of justice in all walks of life. The most efficient way to achieve this is for people to

be convinced of Allah's authority as they eschew man-made authorities. To this end there are ample instructions in this Book of justice. Never has mankind reached, nor shall it, a level of modernity, a standard of civility, or an abundance of resources in the absence of scripture offering it the authority it needs, the security it yearns for, and the justice that has eluded all God-denying societies since time immemorial. Therefore, whoever thinks that this Qur'an has nothing to offer either does not understand it or is a hard-core *kāfir* who will say anything to make his statement of *kufr*.

As for those who say that current people of scripture are not reconciled with the Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) tells them that people of earlier scripture knew that it is Allah's revealed Book — and they were still familiar with scripture before it was overcast and obfuscated by the Church,

**And those to whom We have vouchsafed revelation
aforetime know that this one, too, has been bestowed
from on high, step by step, by your Sustainer. Be not,
then, among the skeptics (6:114).**

The hard-core enemies of Allah, the Qur'an, and the Prophet (ﷺ), in an effort to take advantage of a social tendency among Muslims to want to seek validation elsewhere, argue that because previous people of scripture have not become Muslims, en masse, there is something lacking in Islam, thereby hoping that committed Muslims will lose interest in what Allah has revealed. This is a shenanigan that is wrapped up in the dishonesty of the Church. Earlier people of scripture did become Muslims and they attested to the fact that the Qur'an is scripture, that it is from Allah, and that it is the truth in the full sense of the word. There were Jews and Christians in Arabia who took a stand on this issue. But "official" or "church" Christianity demurred. And this church position is what has seeded the attempts by out-and-out deniers of God to try to polarize people of scripture.

People of scripture need only open their minds and clear their hearts to realize that this Qur'anic scripture has come with the

truth, for the truth, and by the truth from the heights of heaven. The moving and attractive feature of this scriptural *dīn*, now and throughout the outgoing 14 centuries, is its authenticity and certainty. The fact and doctrine of Islam could only survive unscathed throughout these centuries due to the veracity and legitimacy of this God-revealed scripture.

The problem with the governments and regimes within “Christendom” is that instead of recognizing this reality and living with it in peace and harmony, they view it as a “threat” and begin to conspire and launch wars against it. Their political plots and war footing go so far as maligning the meanings of this Qur’anic truth and sending their militaries to all parts of the Muslim world that are showing signs of Islamic revival or revolution. The core of their effort is to divorce God of His authority, to have Muslims “believe” and practice their rituals intensely provided they do not honor Allah (ﷻ) as reference and authority. They seek to strip God of His charter and laws. Then they want religious Muslims to adopt and be satisfied with secular laws and ungodly codes. In this new world order everyone may rule except Allah. And laws may be extracted from traditions, cultures, precedent, and people, but not from Allah. In this manner Islam the *dīn* vanishes, and what ends up being left behind is Islam the “religion.” The secular West wins when Muslims become religious in the church definition of the word, when Muslim countries fall in line with a godless West that defines a God in His heaven who has no authority on earth, and when humans assume divinity after they rob God of His authority.

A good demonstration of Muslims losing their identity as they lose their way in society is their substitution of *shari’ah* with common law. Originating in England, *common law* is a compendium of case law decisions that consist of rulings by judges shaped according to prevailing custom. Decisions reapplied to similar situations, thus, gradually became common to the nation. Common law forms the basis of legal procedures in the Americas as well as in what are supposed to be Islamic societies. Many important matters, such as the construct of a 12-member jury, belong to the common law frame of reference. Reliance on precedents (previous judicial decisions) in

determining legal rights and duties characterizes the common law tradition. Common law permits judges great flexibility to adjust the law to community needs, thereby enhancing judicial power. But this kind of law does not refer to God, scripture, *shari'ah*, or *fiqh*.⁶⁰¹

As mentioned above, much of this common law practice relies upon precedent, a court ruling that bears upon subsequent legal decisions in similar cases. So common law is based primarily upon reasoning from precedents; judges rely upon precedents in deciding cases. Legal disputes in the United States are fought out largely over the application of precedents to a particular controversy. A lawyer will try to convince the court that the precedents serve to prove his or her case. Judges, in turn, must decide between competing precedents in reaching a decision. If a precedent appears to be unreasonable or dated, a court may specifically overrule it and establish a new precedent.⁶⁰²

And even though there is much in civil, non-scriptural law that is referred to the past, there is no scriptural reference in that past. So, what happened to the Old and New Testaments? Are they a reference point in the Western, secular legal tradition, which often lays claim to a Judeo-Christian heritage? Do they inform the decisions of judges at various levels of the materialistic judicial system? Unfortunately, when it comes to lawmaking, they do not exist. This is the parting line between Muslims committed to Allah (ﷻ) and His authority on the one hand, and others who are “committed” to God, except as authority, on the other. Their jurisprudence is secular, ours is scriptural. Their science and philosophy of law exclude God, ours include Allah. Their jurisprudence involves the study of the origins and functions of law, the place of law in society, and the likely consequences of particular courses of legal action minus scripture. Ours is all that plus scripture.

Jurisprudence would appear to be the province of legal scholars, but no important piece of legislation or lawsuit is free of jurisprudential implications. Judicial opinions, particularly in appellate courts, ordinarily take into account the effect that a given line of reasoning will have beyond the immediate parties to the suit. Law is vital in society. It is the rule of conduct prescribed by or

accepted by the governing authority of a state and enforced by courts. In non-scriptural societies the law may derive from a man-made constitution, legislative acts, and administrative rules, or may develop through custom, as have common law and equity. The law controls relations among people and between them and their government. Penalties are imposed for violation of law.

In the secular West, apparently democracy is distinguished from totalitarian government largely in terms of the place of law in society. A totalitarian system operates under the whim of the rulers. In a “free” society, law provides advance notice of what legally is right or wrong. Conflicts are resolved by application of preexisting rules. Law must emanate from and be enforced only by duly constituted authority. However, all of this legal tradition, which is supposed to be advancing the ambiance of social justice in society, has found a reason not to consider God as the lawmaker and lawgiver. This is what accounts for the serious and opposing differences between the committed Muslims, who are cognizant of Allah (ﷻ) as authority, lawmaker, and lawgiver, and the secular regimes and administrations that are intentionally exclusive and forcefully insular of God as authority, lawmaker, and lawgiver.

The nefarious outgrowth of Zionism and imperialism within the larger domain of Judaism and Christianity has given ammunition to this assault on the authority, jurisdiction, and dominion of God. Furthermore, their attempt at creating permanent war against faceless enemies has served them the platform to justify separating God from His authority in terms of separating church from state.

Allah (ﷻ) states that people of scripture genuinely and undeniably know the Qur’an has been issued by Him. Therefore, He reassures the Prophet and all who are with him to be confident of the struggle for the cause of justice and predominance, **“And be not of those who are cynical.”** The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) never had any doubts, nor was he pessimistic about his mission and duties. It has been reported that when the following *āyah* was revealed,

And if you [O Muhammad] are in uncertainty about what We have revealed to you then ask those who are

versed on earlier revelation. The truth has come to you from your Sustainer: be not, then, of those who are cynical (10:94),

the Prophet said, “*I am in no doubt and I will not ask.*”⁶⁰³ The point here is that the pressure, circumstances, and hard times were such that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his followers needed words of assurance and reinforcement.

But regardless of the amount of personal stress and social tension experienced by the Prophet (ﷺ) and those supporting him, the word of Allah (ﷻ) had come to transform their circumstances, **“For, truly and justly has your Sustainer’s promise been fulfilled. There is no power that could alter [the fulfillment of] His promises: and he alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.”** Allah’s promise, when dispatched, is thoroughgoing: the Qur’an needs no additions or improvement. It is integral, complete, and perfect just the way it is. Justice is its word, its intent, and its purpose. The truth about the unknown is in the Qur’an and justice within society comes from the Qur’an. All the information and news in it is true, and all the injunctions and laws in it are just. The words of the Qur’an itself aptly describe the Qur’an, **“...he [Muhammad] orders them to fulfill the common good and to annul the common obnoxious” (7:157).** Everything in the Qur’an, whether it falls into the category of “do or don’t,” “promise or ultimatum,” or “story or chronicle” is accurate and foolproof. No one can add anything of substance to this defined and distinct Qur’an.

The exacting words of the Qur’an indicate that people have no certainty in what they say or do when they are dispassionate or uninvolved with Allah (ﷻ). In this state of mind and pool of ambivalent feelings people are lost. The only time they are in the vicinity of the truth is when they gain it through Allah. The lesson cautions the Prophet (ﷺ) not to make what the majority of the people are thinking and doing a reference point for human behavior. Numbers mean nothing when they represent data on people who are counterfactual to Allah, **“And if you were to obey most people on earth they would divert you away from the**

course to Allah. They but follow speculation, and they themselves hypothecate.”

Peoples throughout the world at the time of revelation were part of an ignocracy (*jāhiliyah*), as they are today. Allah (ﷻ) was neither influential, nor had a commanding presence in their lives. Their ideas and ideology, and the legal systems based upon them were godless, and thus they had no God-given laws to go by. This, not unlike today, is what made them clueless, aimless, and practically lordless. People in a world without God-consciousness are despondent and confused — and how else would they be when the blind are leading the blind? This Scripture is the only sure thing people have. Therefore, Allah tells His Messenger (ﷺ) not to be impressed by a nonplussed multitude whose net worth is zero. No person in his Islamic mind and certain of the Qur’an should be overwhelmed by a bewildered and bedeviled relative majority.

The only one capable of saying with certainty who is right and who is wrong is Allah (ﷻ). His is the only word on this matter, **“Verily, your Sustainer knows best as to who strays from His path, and He knows best as to who are the right-guided.”** People need a rule — a basic generalization that is accepted as true and that can be used as a basis for reasoning or conduct. They need a point of reference for their concepts, values, criteria, activities, and projects. They need a firm basic understanding of what is good and what is bad. And this steady-going point of reference is none other than Allah. His Scripture and His Prophet (ﷺ) set the standard for “we the people.”

No man-induced ideology has the answer. The way of life of a people, reflected in their collectively held ideas, beliefs, and values, cannot be in harmony with itself if it draws on human sources and support alone. Human ideologies are particularly concerned with the form and role of government and the nature of a state’s economic system; they seek to conscript adherents through propaganda. Ideologies, therefore, are the means by which the basic values held by a party, class, group, or individual are articulated; and by which their attitudes and actions on political, economic, and social issues are informed.

Ideology serves to justify an existing social system, or postulates a desirable future social order. After the clash of the two rival ideologies, communism and capitalism, in the last century, the world today is witnessing the last stand of capitalism against people's aspirations for a godly future. Whatever other contemporary ideologies exist in academic form, be they of eastern or western origin, they stand little chance of offering hope and direction for a better tomorrow. Historically, ideologies have even been color-coded for easy identification as, for example, red for revolution, white for counterrevolution, brown for fascism, black for anarchism, green for environmentalism, and blue for Zionism.

In the absence of scripture, the Prophet (ﷺ), and Islam as a solution to these existential issues, our lifetime has been witness to the ideological warfare between man-made systems and constitutions. Most of the 20th century was consumed by godless ideological warfare — a psychological tactic used by the communist and “free-world” blocs in the Cold War. Each side sought to achieve ideological conformity among its own people while trying to convert the large masses of mankind outside its borders to its basic values and “way of life.” This secular bipolar struggle involved, in one arena, competition between Soviet-style communism with its one-party rule and Western-style capitalism and democracy; and in the other, a psychological war of dominance between the Soviet and Chinese communist systems.

The ideological war between communism and capitalism developed an inclination toward good and bad classification of national and international actions as each side tried to convince millions of people of the soundness of its position and the imperialistic, warlike, aggressive nature of its doppelganger. Various advanced psychological techniques were used in disseminating propaganda for each side. In the 1970s, however, a detente between the rival camps encouraged a reduction in propaganda, a lessening of tensions, and an expansion in communication and understanding. The basic ideological competition between rival belief systems, however, continued and increased as detente tended to give way to a return to the Cold War in the 1980s.

However, beginning in 1986, with the instituting by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of his *glasnost* (the practice of more open consultative government and wider dissemination of information) and *perestroika* (the practice of restructuring or reforming the economic and political system) reforms, Cold War attitudes began to give way to increased cooperation and successful disarmament agreements and cultural exchanges. In addition, ideological conformity in the Soviet system began to change as democratic and capitalistic ideas were adopted to moderate Soviet-style socialism. Finally, as the more extremist of the two secular poles gave in and the Soviet Union collapsed, all the rhetoric and propaganda about socialism and communism went into the proverbial black hole. Capitalism, like its erstwhile communist rival, is now in a slow-motion free fall and the moment of impact is not far off. No system, government, or authority that has denied Allah (ﷻ) will survive its *kufr* and *shirk*.⁶⁰⁴

Islam, on the other hand, is the one way of life that offers humanity the peace and justice it has been looking for. Committed Muslims are going to have to take the initiative and lead by struggle, sacrifice, confidence, and society-building. Thus will the authority of Allah (ﷻ) become a social reality.

The *Ḥalāl* in Food Is Related to the *Ḥalāl* in Governance

It would not be appropriate to tackle the subject of *dhabā'ih* (legal meat slaughter, plural of *dhabīḥah*) without a thoroughgoing consideration and assessment of the meaning of divine authority. Hence, with that understanding in mind,

So, why do you not eat [meat] over which Allah's name has been invoked, if you are truly convinced of His *āyāt*? And why should you not eat of that over which Allah's name has been pronounced, seeing that He has so clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you [to eat] — unless you are compelled [to do so]? But behold, [it is precisely in such matters that]

many people lead others astray by their own errant views, without [having any real] knowledge. Verily, your Sustainer is fully aware of those who transgress the bounds of what is right.

But abstain from sinning, be it open or secret — for, behold, those who commit sins shall be requited for all they have earned. Hence, eat not of that over which Allah's name has not been pronounced: for this would be sinful conduct indeed. And, verily, the evil impulses [within men's hearts] whisper to those who have made them their own that they should involve you in argument [as to what is and what is not a sin]; and if you pay heed to them, lo! you will become [like] those who ascribe divinity to other beings or forces beside Allah (6:118–121).

Before looking at the fine points pertaining to meat consumption, the following should be duly noted. Allah (ﷻ) orders man to eat of the meat upon which His name was invoked. The invocation of Allah's name takes the matter out of human calculations and considerations. Some people may find it inhumane to eat meat, and inhumane it would be if man himself sheds an animal's blood independent of Allah. But, here, Allah makes it quite clear that man is pronouncing the death of an animal in the name of He who gave it life, and therefore permitted its death or slaughter, **“So, why do you not eat [meat] over which Allah's name has been cited as an authority, if you are truly convinced of His āyāt?”**

Then Allah asks man why he would not eat of what his Sustainer has made edible for him. After all, He is the one who showed man what he cannot eat, unless there are compelling circumstances, so why would he choose to widen the scope and make things harder for himself by denying himself the sound and healthful meat thus defined?

And why should you not eat of that over which Allah's name has been called to mind, seeing that He has so

clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you [to eat] unless you are compelled [to do so]? (6:119).

This issue is as ancient as it is current. There were ungodly authoritarians then, as there are now, who want to claim they know better as to what is healthful and wholesome to eat. Some of them even have the gall to place their dictates within the “laws of God” and give them an air of acceptability and legitimacy. This lesson comes to shed light on the “holier-than-thou” dieticians, nutritionists, and food managers, who are not only misleading themselves and others, but are also infringing upon the authority of Allah (ﷻ) as they try to become the reference on this topic,

But behold, [it is precisely in such matters that] many people lead others astray by their own errant views, without [having any real] knowledge. Verily, your Sustainer is fully aware of those who transgress the bounds of what is right (6:119).

The succeeding *āyah* in this lesson tells such people to cease their sinful ways, be they public or private. No one can set into law matters of food and ingestion except the Creator Himself. If people with limited and imperfect knowledge are permitted to make their own self-initiated laws in the kitchen they will go on to make laws in the marketplace and business bazaar, **“But abstain from sinning, be it open or secret — for, behold, those who commit sins shall be requited for all they have earned.”**

This lesson teaches humanity at large that all meat slaughtered by the invocation of idols is unlawful and inedible, and this applies as much to meat products purchased at the altar of materialistic commercialism as to meat offered for pagan sacrifices. All meat prepared for purposes of speculation or gambling is also unlawful and inedible. Also unlawful for human consumption is the meat of dead animals, which some *mushriks* would claim is the same as a lawfully slaughtered animal for the former was “slaughtered” by God by His decree of death. So how could Muslims, they would argue, eat of

what they slaughtered but not from what Allah (ﷻ) caused to die (or slaughtered)? Ignocracy has a thousand ways to disguise its God-rejection; this is how the internal suggestions of demons work their way into real life,

Hence, eat not of that over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced: for this is decomposed [meat]; and demons intimate to their own to argue with you... and if you obey them you become *mushriks* (6:120).

Muslims, per this Qur’anic lesson, are not allowed to eat meat coming out of a slaughtering process that refuses to acknowledge and invoke Allah’s name at the time the animal is butchered. Human life is a God-given life and it cannot be put to death unless there is a license from Allah (ﷻ) and clear instructions from Him to put a person to death due to crimes against self, society, or Allah. Similarly, animal life is a God-given life and it cannot be put to death unless there is a license from Allah to do so. Therefore, if a company wants to slaughter animals strictly for purposes of profit without giving due consideration to Allah, then the resulting meat is not edible.

A position on the other extreme of ignocratic (*jāhili*) societies says that livestock should not be eaten at all for reasons of principle; however this view has no credibility, despite the fact of the obvious “idealistic” impulse embedded within it. A person may choose not to eat meat for certain reasons, and that remains his personal choice. But to make that a law and compel people to live by it is an infringement upon and a violation of the holy Writ. Another *āyah* speaks to this topic,

Say [O Prophet], “In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine — for that, behold, is loathsome — or a sinful offering over which any name other than Allah’s has been invoked. But if one is driven by ne-

cessity — neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need — then [know that], behold, your Sustainer is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace” (6:145).

There are, even in the laws from Allah (ﷻ), exceptions. So if a person is in the throes of death due to starvation, imprisonment, or the like and there is nothing to consume but prohibited meat, then it is permissible for him to do so under those circumstances, and as an exception. This is what led Islamic scholars to coin the rule: necessities make prohibitions tolerable,⁶⁰⁵

As for him, however, who is driven [to what is forbidden] by dire necessity and not by an inclination to sinning — behold, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace (5:3).

All of this taken together escorts a sensitive Muslim conscience to a new level. A Muslim knows that he does not obey anyone besides Allah (ﷻ) on social and public matters — and if he does, then he is guilty of *shirk*. But here, clear instructions are given not to obey anyone other than Allah on personal and private issues — issues that pertain to the consumption of food in one’s own house, away from the public eye, and with no significant impact on social organization. But here, too, if a committed Muslim gives way to other authorities on what should be eaten or not, he is guilty of *shirk*.

This clarifies the fact that a Muslim receives his instructions and information on what is lawful and what is unlawful from Allah, and only from Allah (ﷻ). Some people of scripture erred when they referred this matter to “religious authorities” who may have an interpretative say but never a legislative say on the matter. Obeying them with this violation of Allah’s authority is an act of *shirk*. Whenever church or state officials reverse the *ḥarām* or the *ḥalāl*, or interpose the two, they infringe upon and violate the authority of Allah, and in doing so they set themselves up as lords.

The *āyah*, **“They espoused their sages and monks as lords subscript to Allah...” (9:31)**, is vivid in saying that people have

the habit of raising some of their own to impinge upon or contravene Allah's authority. How do they do this? They simply seek counsel from their rabbis and religious leaders, settling upon their opinions while disregarding what Allah (ﷻ) Himself has to say about the matter in question. That is why He says to them, **“And they were ordered to conform to One Divinity” (9:31)**. This One Divinity has the final decision on what is *ḥarām* and what is *ḥalāl*.

The upshot of all this is that a person obeying someone else in contravention of Allah (ﷻ) is a *mushrik*. This equally applies to a “chosen race” Jew, a “saved” Christian, or a *shahādah-mumbling* Muslim. In looking at the political and administrative map of the world today, one cannot be but amazed that, other than a few tiny exceptions here or there, man lives in an ignocratic globe of *shirk*.

The subject matter of *dhabīḥah* alludes to a wide range of health, nutritional, and agricultural or economic discussions. But before getting into these aspects, the first thing to realize is that it is Allah (ﷻ) who teaches man what suits his spiritual and physical constitution. On His authority, man partakes of or abstains from foods or drinks that are chalked out by scripture. To lead a life free of doubts and toxins, it is extremely important for man to honor Allah's authority — solely.

Muslims today are running around looking for *ḥalāl meat*, *gusht-e-halal*, *lahm ḥalāl*, or *dhabīḥah meat* while the authority of Allah (ﷻ) does not occur to them. True, it is the authority of Allah that provides even the notion of *ḥalāl* meat. But it also brings forth a society of equality, justice, and peace. So, why are there anxious Muslims scurrying about to find *ḥalāl* meat but no eager Muslims organizing and planning for a “*ḥalāl*” society or a “*ḥalāl*” government? Moreover, why do Muslims not see all these issues as a continuum, belonging to one long set of teachings and directives? The straightforward answer to these and similar questions is that the Muslims have been suffering for a long time from the imperialist and Zionist definition of who a Muslim is, or what a Muslim should be. It is high time that we know who we are, that we define ourselves, and that we honor Allah (ﷻ) as authority at not only the *ḥalāl-food* store, but at the bank and at the “recruitment center.”

Taking an Animal's Life Requires God's Permission

“Hence, eat not of that over which Allah’s name has not been pronounced: for this would be degenerative indeed.” This guideline pertains to consuming the meat of an animal that was slaughtered without invoking the name of Allah (ﷻ). The *āyah* clearly states that such meat is not suitable as food. Islamic *fiqhī* views on the subject can be classified into three broad categories:

1. Any meat resulting from a slaughtering process in which the name of Allah (ﷻ) was not invoked is inedible, regardless of whether the failure to invoke His name was intentional or accidental. This opinion has been attributed to Ibn ‘Umar, ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī, Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, Mālik ibn Anas, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (inclusive of the early and later *mujtahids* of the Ḥanbalī school of thought), Abū Thawr, Dāwūd al-Zahiri, and Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṭā‘ī, a Shāfi‘ī scholar who wrote about it in his book, *al-Arba‘in*. This conclusion is corroborated by the general meaning of the other *āyah* from *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, **“...and eat of what they [hunting animals] seize for you, but mention Allah’s name over it” (5:4).**

The meaning is underscored by Allah’s words, **“...for it is degenerative.”** The word *it* here may refer to the act of eating or to the meat itself; in any event, both are considered degenerative. The slaughtering process could also be included in the meaning of the *āyah*. Two hadiths relevant to this context say,

*If you send out your trained dog while invoking Allah’s name, then eat of what it captures.*⁶⁰⁶

*Whatever [animal you slaughtered] with flowing blood and the invocation of Allah’s name [upon it], you may eat [its flesh].*⁶⁰⁷

2. The *tasmiyah* (invocation of Allah’s name) is not a condition; rather it is recommended. Hence, if it is not attended to during the slaughtering process, intentionally or unintention-

ally, it does not render the meat *ḥarām*. This is the predominant opinion in the Shāfi‘ī school of thought. It is also attributed to ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Hurayrah, and ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāh, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Mālik ibn Anas. Al-Shāfi‘ī understood the *āyah* to mean that meat over which Allah’s name has not been invoked while others have been invoked is unlawful. To offer this particular position, he relied on another *āyah*, “...or a degenerative offering over which any name other than Allah’s has been invoked (6:145).

3. If the *basmalah* or *tasmiyah* was omitted at the time of slaughter because the butcher forgot it, then the meat is *ḥalāl*; but if he intentionally omitted the invocation of Allah’s name, then the meat is *ḥarām*. This point of view is the preponderant Mālikī and Ḥanbalī *ijtihād*. Abū Ḥanīfah and his scholarly companions share the same persuasion. This is also what has been reported to be the position of Imam ‘Alī, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab, ‘Aṭā’, Ṭāwūs, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad, and others.⁶⁰⁸

With all that has been mentioned about edible meat in the *āyah* above and in other *āyāt*, animal flesh sold as food in today’s commercial markets of the world still invites deeper scrutiny. For some people to have a sense of what meat consumption is all about in the United States, for example, the average person ate 63 lb of beef, 47 lb of pork, and 1.1 lb of lamb in 1991. However, beef’s popularity has steadily declined since the late-1970s as chicken and fish have become more popular, and due to health concerns. In 1991, Americans consumed 43.9 lb of chicken; much of this change was due to consumer concerns about cholesterol and fat. Nonetheless, meat production has a large economic and environmental impact. Livestock graze on one-third of the land of North America. Half of US crops such as corn, wheat, and soybeans go to livestock feed, especially for cattle. Directly and indirectly, through fodder irrigation, farm animals account for a major part of the water consumed in the United States. Half of the antibiotics produced in the US are given to livestock.⁶⁰⁹

Meat contains 20–30% protein, variable amounts of fat, and approximately 60% water. The fat content depends upon the type of meat, the nutritional state of the animal, the degree of trimming, and the method of preparation. Meat and dairy products supply half of the total fat, all of the cholesterol, and 75% of the saturated fatty acids of the standard American diet. Lean meat and fatty meat both contain about the same amount of cholesterol, 70–80 mg per 3-oz serving of lamb, beef, chicken, or pork. Although beef and chicken contain about the same amount of cholesterol, beef fat is much more saturated than chicken fat.⁶¹⁰

Meat — an excellent source of protein, B-complex vitamins, and certain trace minerals like zinc and iron — supplies about 90% of vitamin B12 in the US diet, 70% of protein, 66% of riboflavin (vitamin B2), 54% of vitamin B6, 46% of niacin (vitamin B3), and 36% of iron, but only 3% of calcium. Therefore meat is a poor source of calcium. Meat protein is considered to be “high quality,” that is, it provides ample amounts of all of the eight essential amino acids (those which cannot be synthesized by the body). A little animal protein with a meal increases iron uptake from plant food. Fish, poultry, and shellfish constitute the rest of the meat group, one of the four basic food groups developed in the 1950s to help design a balanced diet. In the food guide pyramid, the protein group is represented by meat, poultry, fish, dried beans, eggs and nuts. Two to three servings from this group are recommended daily.⁶¹¹

Several health concerns are associated with a diet heavy in the consumption of meat,

1. Meat contributes about 35% of the saturated fat intake in the typical American diet. In particular, red meat contributes about 49 g of fat/person/day and accounts for about 30% of total fat consumption. Excessive fat is associated with an increased risk of obesity, elevated blood cholesterol, and increased risk of heart disease and cancer. By contrast, poultry and fish, provided they are not breaded and fried, add little to the total fat consumption.
2. Excessive protein consumption is generally a bigger problem in the United States than inadequate dietary protein. Protein

- quality is not generally an issue except in the case of a vegetarian who does not eat a variety of plant protein sources. Too much protein is known to cause calcium loss, thereby exacerbating bone loss (osteoporosis).
3. A high-protein diet may interfere with kidney function, especially in diabetics.
 4. Meat is often contaminated with traces of pesticides, growth promoters, drugs, and antibiotics. Their long-term effects on health are problematic, if not detrimental.⁶¹²

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has defined various grades of beef according to fat content. The type of cut of meat is more important than the grade of meat, which depends on the texture and the amount of visible fat. For example, top round is leaner than rib roast. Though regulations apply to beef, mutton, lamb, veal, and pork, government grading of meat is not compulsory. Over half of all US beef is graded into US Prime, US Choice, US Select, US Standard, US Commercial, US Utility, US Cutter, and US Canner. US Prime generally has the highest fat content.⁶¹³

Food producers are required to meet US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards for meat content in a variety of prepared foods. The amount of meat actually permitted in different foods varies immensely. This is important to keep in mind if meat or protein content is a concern. Processed meat is meat that has been modified by chemical treatment and extensive manipulation. This category includes bacon, pastrami, salami, liverwurst, ham, hot dogs, hot sausages, luncheon meats, cold cuts, bologna, and Polish sausage. Sausages and processed meats are some of the fattiest foods available. Salami, bologna, and liver sausage contain especially large amounts of fat, and up to 80% of their calories can come from fat. This level is equivalent to a huge 15–17 g per 2-oz serving. Processed meats often contain high levels of sodium (500–1,000 mg per serving). Furthermore, sodium nitrite, sometimes added as a preservative or to enhance the color or flavor of the product, is a known carcinogen.⁶¹⁴

After going through all of the above secular and scientific approaches to meat preparations and consumption (as in the United States), some Muslims may ask whether the commercialized meat in mainstream supermarkets is permissible for them to eat. Simply put, these meat products are not edible because they do not conform to the standards of *dhabīḥah* and *ḥalāl*, which are absolute requirements for meat ingestion and consumption as pronounced in the Book of Allah and demonstrated by His Apostle (ﷺ).

So, how does all this compare or contrast with *kosher* (satisfying the requirements of Jewish food regulations, known as *kashruth*, *kashrut*, or *kashrus* — Hebrew for *fitness*)? In Judaism, these are the regulations that prohibit the eating of certain foods and require that other foods be prepared in a specified manner. *Kosher* also denotes the state of being fit to eat or drink according to Jewish dietary law. Most prescriptions regarding *kashruth* are found in the Old Testament and the four of the books of the Torah: Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Genesis, and Exodus. The laws primarily appear in the Book of Leviticus and again in the Book of Deuteronomy,

1. clean and unclean four-legged creatures (Leviticus, 11:1–8);
2. clean and unclean fish (Leviticus, 11:9–12);
3. unclean birds (Leviticus, 11:13–19);
4. forbidden and permitted winged insects (Leviticus, 11:20–23);
5. other unclean creatures (Leviticus, 11:29–43).

The characteristics of clean and unclean beasts, fish, and birds are repeated in Deuteronomy, 14:3–20.

To be kosher, four-legged animals must chew their cud, have cloven hoofs, and be cloven-footed. Thus pigs (and their byproducts — pork, ham, bacon, lard, etc.), hares, camels, donkeys, and horses are not kosher. Cows are kosher, and sheep, goats, and oxen are also kosher, with the exception of part of their abdominal fat and hip sinew. Animals that are defective, diseased, crippled, mauled, shot dead, or die of natural causes are forbidden. So are creatures that have paws or travel on their bellies. Fish that have fins and scales while in the water are kosher. Thus catfish, other scaleless fish, and all shellfish (lobsters, clams, crabs, oysters, shrimp, scallops) are not

kosher; neither are seals or whales. All birds of prey and those that live in dark places or marshy land are not kosher. Only those insects with jointed legs (for example, crickets and grasshoppers) are permitted.

These mammals and birds must be slaughtered according to a ritual (*shehitah*) that, if violated, makes the meat unfit for consumption. The slaughterer (*shohet*) recites a prayer and then makes an incision across the neck of the animal or fowl with a special knife that is razor-sharp and has a smooth edge with absolutely no nicks. The cutting must be made by moving the knife in a single swift and uninterrupted sweep and not by pressure or by stabbing. The cut severs the main arteries, rendering the animal unconscious and permitting the blood to drain from the body. Since the blood of beasts and birds is forbidden (Leviticus, 17:12–14), before cooking, meat must undergo a ritual process of pre-soaking for half an hour and “salting” (*meliha*) for one hour to draw off any blood that may remain within the meat after death. Objections have sometimes been raised to this method of slaughter on the grounds of cruelty, and in some European countries this resulted in legislation forbidding *shehitah*.

Strict separation of meat and dairy products is enjoined, both in eating and in preparation; these two types of food may not be eaten in the same meal and distinct sets of dishes, cutlery, utensils, and table linens must be used for meat and dairy products during the time of preparation. This is based on the threefold repetition of the biblical prohibition against seething a kid in its mother's milk (Exodus, 23:19, 34:26; Deuteronomy, 14:21). Some foods are “neutral” (*pareve*) and may be eaten freely with meat or milk. No restrictions apply to the use of vegetables and fruit. Ultra-Orthodox Judaism requires that non-Jews be excluded from the preparation of kosher wine. During the festival of Passover (Pesah), special laws exclude the use of leavening in bread and other baked goods.

According to the Bible in its current form, God differentiated the clean from the unclean creatures to set the Jews apart as a holy people. God concludes the commandments, “For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” (Leviticus, 11:45). Attempts

have been made to explain the dietary laws on the basis of hygiene. This explanation, however, has been criticized as missing the basic intent of the laws, which is to instill holiness in a people. Not all Jews keep kosher. In 1885, a conference of United States Reform rabbis in Pittsburgh affirmed that “all laws regulating diet are apt to obstruct modern spiritual elevation.”

For Muslims who take these matters seriously, the process observed by practicing Jews of thoroughly draining an animal’s blood makes the meat of these animals permissible in the absence of or difficulty obtaining *dhabīḥah* meat. However, as to “Christians” who generally and willingly comply with secular and commercial codes concerning dietary and food consumption practice, Muslims are cautioned to avoid such meat altogether.

***Kufr* and Authoritarianism**

After the above *āyāt* induce man to reflect and reconsider the source of his decisions pertaining to a dietary matter that accompanies him almost on a daily basis, the succeeding *āyāt* transition into the larger scope of things: *īmān* and *kufr*, that is, the affirmation of Allah’s authority or denial of it. In this view of the larger picture, man can visualize the fact that nations and body politics have their elitist criminals who dispense their authority and impose their order. The *āyāt* below unveil the lordliness and scorn such elitists harbor in their own selves, which is what often serve as a barrier between them and Allah (ﷻ). They culminate with an exquisite picture, on the one hand, of *īmān* and its effects on the hearts of men; and, on the other, with that which makes men feel despondent and dejected: the condition of *kufr*,

Is then He who was dead [at heart] and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light whereby he might see his way among men — [is then he] like one [who is lost] in darkness deep, out of which he cannot emerge? [But] thus it is: goodly seem all their own doings to those who deny the truth.

And it is in this way that We cause the great ones in every land to become its [greatest] criminals, there to weave their schemes: yet it is only against themselves that they scheme — and they perceive it not. And whenever a [divine] message comes to them, they say, “We shall not commit ourselves unless we are given the like of what Allah’s apostles were given!” [But] Allah knows best upon whom to bestow His message. Abasement in the sight of Allah will befall those who have become guilty of evildoing, and suffering severe for all the schemes they were wont to weave.

And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, his bosom He opens wide with willingness toward self-surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his bosom He causes to be tight and constricted, as if he were climbing unto the skies: it is thus that Allah inflicts horror upon those who will not commit themselves [to Him] (6:122–125).

The conceptual demarcation in this lesson is as clear as it is real in the lives of individuals and societies. Outlined here is a fact of life that has its roots in the soul of man. Experience bears this out. This scriptural relationship with Allah (ﷻ) by its very nature energizes what would otherwise be a travel-worn and burned-out heart. This Qur’anic liaison with Allah enlightens the venue of feelings and intuition in man. In light of this, man has a new approach to things, a new perspective on reality, and a fresh start in life — something unknown to man before this scriptural connectedness to Allah. *Īmān*, the trust in Allah and the security from Him, causes the heart to radiate like nothing else. *Īmān* turns the heart on. *Īmān* is connectedness, inspiration, reception, verve, and thus life in the healthy and vibrant sense of the word. This experience is beyond words: one has to try it and live it to know it and appreciate it,

Is then He who was dead [at heart] and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light

whereby he might see his way among men — [is then he] like one [who is lost] in darkness deep, out of which he cannot emerge? (6:122).

By contrast, *kufir* is a detachment, an insularity from the vigor and energy of life itself. *Kufir* is isometric with death, a dispassion and breakup with Allah (ﷻ); therefore, it becomes a form of sterility within the abundance of life — current life, eternal life, and the essence of life. When a person breaks away from Allah through a conscious act of *kufir* he severs himself from the force and energy of life itself. His natural sensory receptors malfunction; so he lives as if he were lifeless. *Kufir* is the dimming of the spirit, the slur of the soul and thus a form of gloom and wickedness. It is deviation from the norm, obscurity, and an absence of light and illumination.

The proper relationship of *īmān* with Allah (ﷻ) starts up and touches off insight and intuition. An *īmānī* personality enlightened by Allah is appealing, warm, confident, active, serious, calm, courteous, intelligent, wise, sincere, giving, and responsible. Conversely, a *kāfir* personality that denies Allah is shabby, irritable, mysterious, fearful, discontented, angry, vulgar, banal, bigoted, dishonest, selfish, and troublesome.

In the physical and material world light is defined to be electromagnetic waves in the visible range, having a wavelength from about 400 nm in the extreme violet to about 770 nm in the extreme red. Light is considered to exhibit particle and wave properties, and the fundamental particle, or quantum, of light is called the *photon*. In a vacuum, the speed of light (and of all electromagnetic radiation), first measured accurately by Danish astronomer Olaus Roemer in 1681, is approximately 186,000 miles/s (300,000 km/s), and is a universal constant denoted by *c*.⁶¹⁵

As textbooks have it, in 1666, Isaac Newton was the first to discover that sunlight (or white light) is composed of a mixture of monochromatic colors in certain proportions and that it could be separated into its components by refraction (as with a prism). Before Newton's time it was supposed (largely in Europe) that the dispersion of light produced color instead of separating already ex-

isting colors. The ancients also believed, erroneously, that light traveled at infinite speed.⁶¹⁶

Insofar as scripture is concerned, light symbolizes God's presence in the Old and New Testaments. According to Psalm 4, Yahweh is the light of the believer's face, that is, God gives life and also that discernment by which a human being can "see" what is real and true. Psalm 119 says that God's word spoken through the Prophet Moses (ﷺ) and the other prophetic witnesses, is a light to enlighten the path of the believer. Genesis 1 affirms that God created the light and the universe by separating light from the darkness of chaos. God's presence in the tent of meeting (tabernacle) and later in the temple was marked by the eternal light and the menorah, the seven-branched candelabrum (1 Samuel, 3:3; 2 Chronicles, 4:7).⁶¹⁷

In the New Testament, John the Baptist spoke of the coming messiah as the light that would enlighten everyone (John, 1:4) and Jesus (ﷺ) spoke of himself as the light of the world (John, 3:19–21, 8:12). In the Synoptic Gospels, St. Matthew records that Jesus called his followers the light of the world and warned them not to hide their light (Matthew, 5:14–16). Both St. Paul (Ephesians, 5:8) and St. John the Evangelist (1 John, 1:5–7, 2:11) use "light" as their term for the salvation brought into the world by Jesus Christ.⁶¹⁸

The common practice of lighting candles on the altar during Christian worship services preserves the biblical symbolism of God's presence. Traditional candle-lighting ceremonies on Christmas Eve affirm the faith that Jesus (ﷺ) brought divine light into a world darkened by sin and unbelief. The Jewish Festival of Lights (Hanukkah) also symbolizes God's presence, in particular, the return of the desecrated temple to the worship of Yahweh by Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees, 4:52).⁶¹⁹

In the Islamic sense, a committed Muslim finds this light (*nūr*) in his heart. As a result, the facts of this *dīn* become clear, as does his working relationship with Allah (ﷻ). With this *nūr* in play, the Islamic *dīn* becomes more than just a collection of beliefs, a handful of rituals, a string of laws, or a rigid system. In an enlightened heart, this *dīn* blossoms into a coordinated certainty, a consol-

idated resolve, and firmness of purpose. This shining fact penetrates into the very essence of human nature and blends with it perfectly and beautifully.

Allah's *nūr* runs through the psychology of the committed Muslims and gives them freedom from doubt, a feeling of trust, and a state of confident hopefulness. It opens up horizons and sheds light on the social issues of the world that have been smothered by false ideologies and dubious theologies. The refined Muslim finds clarity in his own self, in his intentions, in his ideas, in his plans, and in his movements. Now he can see Allah's will at work in the human condition and he can also see the pathetic attempts of wayward elites and arrogant powers as they exhaust all their material assets only to crash in due time — as the will of Allah (ﷻ) is overwhelming and unstoppable. The agency of this *nūr* brings history itself into focus. Hence, the human “Gods,” who were heretofore hidden to the unenlightened eye, can no longer disguise their intrigues, plots, and corruption; they can no longer be concealed by lack of information or a deluge of false information. Their political pranks as well as their wicked skulduggery are now out in the open. In the absence of any *nūr*, these all-time criminals can get away with falsehood, pretense, and exaggeration; they can even “legalize” their fraud, treachery, and deception. However, they can only afford to remain oblivious to this heaven-sent *nūr* so long as the human bodies around it remain averse to their God-given responsibilities,

How can a lifeless person that We resurrect and anoint with light, by which he interacts with people — how can he be equivalent to one who is in deep darkness and cannot get out of? (6:122).

This deathlike condition describes what the Muslims were in before they were bathed in the light of Islam. Before this *dīn*, the ancient Arabians were lacking in spirit and animation. *Īmān* is what breathed life into them. And from then on, these Muslims were lively, high-spirited, vibrant, and energetic. Prior to Allah's *nūr*, their hearts were empty, their lives were void, and they were

out of civilizational breath. Their sensibilities were as arid as the desert sand. But then something miraculous happened. This *nūr* came to them, and their terminal condition was relieved. They became the proverbial “light unto nations.” And into these nations they proceeded. They lifted the social condition of the world they went into: destitution found a way out of its poverty, people in fear and terror found assured their own safety and security, and people in slavery and captivity realized their liberty and freedom. This was a new day for mankind, a rebirth of humanity, and a liberation of the underclasses. Finally, peoples and populations threw off the yoke of human gods and discovered their Sovereign and Authority. Contrast this elevated status that grew out of an enlightened relationship with Allah (ﷻ) with the abstruseness and vagueness that taints the lives of those who live in doubt and ambivalence. These are two separate and different worlds — and there is a cosmic distance between them.

“It is in this manner that God-deniers [mis]calculate their own feats...” This is the conundrum of a wayward humanity. *Kufr*, obscurity, and death are glossed over, doctored up, and falsely represented. But human defiance can be traced to the way Allah (ﷻ) created man’s nature; He “deposited” in his human nature an inclination toward light on one side and obscurity on the other side. There is a dual propensity in man to move either this way or that. The very essence of gaining a life is to make a conscious and deliberate choice of either one of the two opposite leading directions. If man *chooses* to step into the area of twilight and iniquity, then his next steps inevitably lead to a sense of “propriety” and progress. These missteps gain a life of their own, and eventually man rationalizes his mistakes and solidifies his deviation. Thereafter, the group-solidarity effect, in which like-minded individuals aggregate around their secular convictions and/or scientific conclusions to buttress their turpitude and transmutation away from Allah and His moral and legal authority, combines these behaviors into a form of societal institutionalization.

Once this direction away from Allah (ﷻ) takes its course there is no returning to that original point of departure, as the

snowballing effect has become an avalanche. This rapid increase and accumulation produces for every such society its elites and power-mongers. And these power-abusers and ruling classes do what they do best: they apply their criminal policies and aggressive politics to the bitter end, **“And it is in this way that We render into each nation-society its elitist criminals to become its troublemakers. They only make trouble for themselves but they cannot perceive it.”**

One of the social laws from early in human history is that every urban center, every social order, or every nation-society develops a class of governmental criminals or totalitarian felons. In the nature of things, as they have progressed considerably down the road in denying God’s authority, these ruling-class criminals occupy positions of hostility to Allah (ﷻ) and His *dīn*. The one fact to which they are extremely sensitive, but to which many commoners are ignorant, is that Allah’s *dīn* strips them of the power positions and the “legal protections” they employed to reduce populations to slavery. Allah’s *nūr* demonstrates that there is nothing inspirational or religious about these above-the-law officials, for it was through a secular system that they gained control of the people and crushed them into subservience and submission.

Authority, in its state of nature, is the quintessence of divinity. When men become the authorities over other men they become the latter’s gods, even if they would deny this verbally through propaganda channels in the most systemic and elaborate way. Whether they confess to it or not, once these autocratic rulers impose their authority on the people, they do so by replacing Allah’s authority, and by extension through inferring a divinic role (if authority is understood to be at the essence of divinity). There is a “god” in their government even if they deny that night and day. Or else why are these governments of man inviolate and untouchable? Why does man have to obey the laws of these governments without having a choice, but may disobey the laws of God as his own choice?

Elitist criminals emerge from societies that no longer accept the rule of Allah (ﷻ). These societies develop their own authoritarianism. While authority in the God-given sense of the word

refers to legitimate power, authoritarianism is associated with “arbitrary,” illegitimate power, at least according to liberal and “democratic” evaluation. Non-representative regimes apparently share the following characteristics: those governing are self-appointed and, even if elected, cannot be displaced by the citizens’ free choice among competitors; and there is no freedom to create a broad range of groups, organizations, and political parties to compete for power or question the decisions of the rulers.

Authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, though not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits, but actually quite predictable ones. Operating with neither the resources of legitimacy associated with the popular will nor the mobilization capacities of totalitarian systems, the authoritarian regimes on the periphery of ideological centers feel the pressure to imitate, incorporate, and manipulate dominant ideological styles. Generic values like patriotism, nationalism, economic development, social justice, and order and the pragmatic incorporation of ideological elements derived from the dominant political centers allow rulers without mobilized mass support to neutralize opponents, co-opt a variety of supporters, and decide policies pragmatically.⁶²⁰

The lack of ideology limits the capacity to mobilize people, to create the psychological and emotional identification of the masses. Indeed, limited political mobilization is a characteristic of authoritarian regimes. In some, the de-politicization of the masses corresponds to the intent of the rulers; in others, the rulers initially intended to mobilize their supporters and the population. The struggle for national independence from a colonial power, the desire to incorporate into the political process sectors of the society untapped by any previous political leadership, or the defeat of a highly mobilized opponent in societies in which public representation had allowed and encouraged such a mobilization, lead to the emergence of mobilizational authoritarian regimes of a nationalist,

democratic, or fascist variety. The maintenance of equilibrium between limited pluralisms limits the effectiveness of the mobilization and leads to apathy. Authoritarian regimes include the following varieties, which are described in moderate detail below

1. bureaucratic-military;
2. organic statist;
3. mobilizational, including post-democratic and post-colonial;
4. personal rulership; and
5. post-totalitarian.⁶²¹

The most frequent subtype are regimes in which a coalition, predominantly but not exclusively controlled by army officers, bureaucrats, and technocrats, establishes control of government and excludes or includes other groups without commitment to a specific ideology, acts pragmatically within the limits of its bureaucratic mentality, and neither creates nor allows a mass single party to play a dominant role. The coalition may operate without parties, but frequently has created an official government-sponsored single party. In a few cases it allows a multiparty system but makes sure that the elections do not offer an opportunity for a free competition for popular support.⁶²²

Quite different in form from bureaucratic-military-technocratic authoritarian regimes is what is called *organic statist*, which presupposes a corporatist mode of interest representation and participation or mobilization. Theorists of the organic statist authoritarian model contrast the natural (or organic) development of business and professional organizations, trade unions, universities, churches, work-place associations, neighborhood groups, etc, to the artificial formation of political parties and other institutions for interest representation and the organization of political life in competitive democracies. A set of false assumptions pervades the model, beginning from the expectation that natural primary associations will not be troubled by internal conflicts of ideology or interest. Moreover, in historical terms, no political system has employed an exclusively organic or corporatist institutional format. Nevertheless, ideologies derived from the organic statist model

and corporatism have significantly influenced 20th-century authoritarian regimes.⁶²³

Benito Mussolini, linked originally with the syndicalist tradition, reinforced by the intellectual heritage of rightist nationalists, and searching for the approval of Catholics, built a corporatist superstructure that served conservative interests by disenfranchising a highly mobilized working class and providing a channel for the complex interest structure of a relatively developed society. The strong totalitarian tendencies of many fascist leaders and the conception of an “ethical” state above interests derived from an idealistic tradition, however, created an uneasy balance between the corporatist and the single-party mobilizational components of the regime.⁶²⁴

“Arrogant elitists... there to weave their schemes...” In the crises in Europe that followed the end of WWI, Leninism and fascism emerged as anti-public representation and illiberal mobilizational regimes, both based on elite representation of the majority and driven by overarching historical goals, whether to liberate the proletariat or affirm a vision of national grandeur. Mobilizational authoritarian states emerged also with considerable frequency among post-colonial states where the struggle for independence would often become associated with an individual leader. In a context of arbitrary and often externally imposed national boundaries, fierce ethnic rivalries, religious and linguistic diversity, and the weak institutionalization of political representation and administration, the dilemmas of underdevelopment and state-building were met with authoritarian responses. One-party systems and personalized charismatic leadership emerged as alternative authoritarian systems characterized by mass mobilization.⁶²⁵

Independent of the Euro-morphic disguises (constitutional forms, single party, bureaucratic organization) and the symbolic attempts to link with tradition, many post-colonial African states can best be characterized as regimes of personal rulership. Personal rule is a system of relations linking rulers not with the “public” or even the ruled (at least not directly), but with patrons, associates, clients, supporters, and rivals, who constitute the “system.” The system is structured not by institutions but by the politicians themselves, and

this dependence on persons accounts for its essential vulnerability. It is severely restrictive with regard to political liberties, while being generally tolerant of non-political rights (except in the tyrannical regimes). Rulers exercise nearly unlimited "legal" competence. They use co-optation and consultation; patronage; agreement and accord; and intimidation and coercion in different mixes. The fate of the ruler affects that of the political class supporting him and often the welfare of the political order. In adding the restraints and uncertainties posed by foreign political and economic factors to poor countries dependent on a few primary exports, and with crop fluctuations due to the weather, the instability of personal rule can be better understood. Foreign economic and military assistance, including that given by neighboring countries to the ruler or to the exiles and rebels, is another factor. Personal rule therefore presents the paradox of relatively autonomous, even arbitrary power, but one marked by coercion and the inability to implement policies owing to the lack of resources and trained officials, by some standards.⁶²⁶

Some social scientists may distinguish four ideal types of personal rule: princely, autocratic, prophetic, and tyrannical. The prophetic was more characteristic of some of the founding leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere and comes closer to the ideals if not the realities of the single-party mobilizational type of regimes. The distinction between princes and autocrats provides insight into each type of authoritarian regime. The prince is an astute observer and manipulator of lieutenants and clients; he tends to rule jointly with other oligarchs and to cultivate their loyalty presiding over the struggle for promotion to an office without allowing it to get out of hand. Some of them were founders like Jomo Kenyatta or Kenneth Kaunda; the most distinguished representative was, according to some, Leopold Senghor. The autocrat is distinguished by his greater freedom to act as he sees fit and his antagonism to "politicians' politics" and the autonomous power and authority of others, forcing those who refuse his autocracy to become his dependents or to become conspirators or exiles. The autocrat's power is based on his own abilities and experience, specifi-

cally personal, and unlikely to be transferred to another leader. This and the lesser likelihood that capable and experienced politicians will be available to ensure a peaceful succession will lead to instability until someone consolidates himself in power and learns the skills of personal rule. Personal rulership is more unpredictable, more paternalistic or arbitrary (even potentially oppressive), tyrannical, and corrupting, but ultimately weaker and more unstable than more “formed” authoritarian regimes.⁶²⁷

A number of highly arbitrary, personalistic, and non-representative but non-totalitarian regimes have been labeled authoritarian. One of their most distinctive forms may be termed *sultanistic*. A rule based neither on tradition, nor on ideology or sense of mission, nor on charismatic appeal, nor on the purpose of defending a particular social order (class structure, conception of the nation, religious traditions), sultanistic rule benefits the ruler and his family, friends, cronies, and praetorian guards. It blurs the boundaries between the public treasury and the ruler’s wealth, establishing profit-oriented monopolies, demanding gifts and payoffs in exchange for opportunities to contract with the state or even to engage in business activities. The power is based on the loyalty of henchmen, a praetorian guard, and clients, handsomely rewarded and licensed to use arbitrary power, but also at his mercy, one day in his grace, another day persecuted, and sometimes rehabilitated.⁶²⁸

Officers and bureaucrats have no regular careers, no distinctive training, and no status honor; business elites cannot base their decisions on the market of the formal legal system, but only on the good will of the ruler, although his self-interest might lead him to respect foreign companies. Power is neither institutionalized nor oriented toward the achievement of collective goals of a society or even a class of society. Class position is derived from the relation to the ruler, and the wealthy may become the object of extortion and arbitrary actions, as nearly anyone. This does not mean that the ruler may not show his generosity to his subjects and engage in public enterprises contributing to his glory. All kinds of institutional and ideological facades, from elections (sometimes, as in the case of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, of a stand-in) to a single party (like Sese

Seko Mobutu), from modern ideological language to pseudo-traditionalism, serve the ruler. The term *rule* rather than *regime* is being employed here on account of the lack of institutionalization, and of *saudism* rather than *patrimonialism*, because office holders do not have rights to their office, there are no secure appropriations, and rulers are not bound by traditional norms or custom.⁶²⁹

Few problems lead to more discussion than how to conceptualize the changes in the Soviet Union and some Eastern European communist countries (with the possible exception of Poland) after de-Stalinization. After some theoretical efforts in the early post-Stalin period, some of the contemporary works were largely descriptive, avoiding the debates on totalitarianism although explicitly or implicitly rejecting the applicability of the ideal type.⁶³⁰

Those systems approached the authoritarian model, but with some significant differences. The fact that those regimes came after the transformation of society by totalitarianism; that the institutions and organization sustaining them — particularly the single party — had not been dismantled (except the extensive terror machine and the gulag); that the use of the wooden language of “frozen ideology”; and that the memory of the recent past, made them different from some authoritarian systems. Totalitarianism can be said to have failed in its most positive ambitions to change people, to provide a sense of purpose and meaning. But it succeeded in changing societies and largely destroying the bases of the social-cultural pluralism of civil society, the autonomy and self-assertiveness of churches, the distinctive ethos of professions and their corporate groups, and (in socialist societies) the independence of economic actors.⁶³¹

The result was that the social pluralism that could give rise to a latent and perhaps politically relevant pluralism did not exist. In addition, the relative closure of those societies and the control of the mass media made it impossible for the broader population to think about alternative political models (as in most authoritarian regimes). There was room for privatization and dissidence on a scale intolerable under totalitarianism, but not for the wide range of nonlegal and illegal oppositions as under most authoritarian

regimes, partly because the civil society that might protect or encourage them did not exist. An exception was Poland. Even before the rise of Solidarity as a nonlegal but powerful political actor, Poland was an authoritarian regime, owing to the special position retained by the Catholic Church.⁶³²

The following changes favored a move toward post-totalitarianism: the ossification of an ideology mechanically repeated, the growing acceptance of programmatic or rational criteria in policy-making not derived from or even compatible with the ideological tenets, the ritualization of indoctrination, the growing lack of support by intellectuals, and the tolerance for aesthetic expressions not subject to ideological dictates. Only the articulation and diffusion of dangerous ideas was still limited. Ideology, accepted in a diffuse and inarticulated way, could serve as a “mentality” to the apparatchiks (members of a communist party administrative system) but did not occupy the central place it once did. The single party and its top leadership continued to be the central decision-making structure, but changes in the activities of the party organizations, in recruitment and promotion through nomenclature, and the composition of the top leadership could not be ignored. Bureaucratization and gerontocratic (related to a state governed by old people) tendencies characterized the party. These changes resulted from the reconsideration by the elite of the cost, including themselves, of the totalitarian model, particularly the insecurity (such as Stalin’s purges and the Cultural Revolution) and considerations of efficacy in the competitive world system of economies, technology, and military capability. Without question, de-Stalinization, the elimination of massive and indiscriminate terror, and the introduction of socialist legality (even when, for dissidents, a repressive legality) have contributed to the transformation of totalitarian systems.⁶³³

Since the 1970s, a “third wave” of democratization has led to transitions to democracy in many authoritarian regimes, first in Southern Europe, then in Latin America and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and then in the 1990s, in the post-totalitarian communist countries of Eastern Europe and parts of the former Soviet Union. These developments have led to a growing body of

literature that analyzes the crisis of breakdown of authoritarian regimes and the different paths to democratization. Those changes range from negotiated transitions imposed from above, to overthrow by coup, abdication, or disintegration of the regime.⁶³⁴

Although each transition has its own distinctive characteristics, the type of anti-populist rule can make a difference in the path followed in the transition and the legacy to the new people-inclusive system. In a number of authoritarian military regimes, the military decided to end authoritarian rule, allowing free elections that transferred power to more representative presidents, but sometimes retaining certain privileges and the implicit threat to contest decisions affecting the armed forces. The limited changes in the society often led to the restoration of the old constitution and re-emergence of the old party system and patterns of politics. More institutionalized authoritarian regimes did not lead to the restoration of the pre-dictatorship regimes, whatever their form, but to a new representative regime owing to the social change that had taken place. In the case of civilian or civilianized regimes the transition often was negotiated between reformist incumbents and the opposition.⁶³⁵

The regimes characterized as sultanistic, above, have not led to such peaceful, orderly, and negotiated transitions, but to a broad and heterogenous coalition that gains power violently and establishes a provisional government. Such a government in a number of cases has led to the establishment of a new authoritarian (sometimes revolutionary) rule, rather than to continued instability.⁶³⁶

Despite an apparent move toward Western-style democracy in this vast *jāhiliyah*, totalitarian, or at least post-totalitarian and authoritarian regimes still exist. But the crisis of the ideologies that have supported these regimes (Marxism-Leninism, communism, fascism, authoritarian corporatism, and derivatives like “African socialism” or the “national security state”), the recognition by some intellectuals of the value of popular political participation as something more than “formal” or “bourgeois” popular participation, and the failure in performance of centrally planned socialist economies make the establishment of non-populist regimes less attractive.

Nonetheless, the failure of new democracies to satisfy popular expectations, social and economic conflict, ethnic violence, and aggressive nationalism may well lead either to authoritarian rule all over again or to new political grounds where public opinion and the masses of people will finally wake up and realize that their stability and well-being can only be secure and steady when they acknowledge God as their sovereign, authority, and reference in these matters that have caused so much suffering and wars.⁶³⁷

When this overview of the past century is placed in the meanings of the *āyah*, **“And it is in this way that We render unto each nation-society its elitist charlatans to become its conspirators; they only conspire against themselves, but they cannot perceive it,”** a historical and social law emerges. There will approach a time when this tug of war concerning Allah’s indisputable authority will be settled. And it will be settled on His terms as has always happened with those who tried to strip Allah (ﷻ) of His authority. Those who use temporal force against earthly humans standing up for Allah’s will, in due time, find out that they were fighting a losing battle, **“They only conspire against themselves, but they cannot perceive it.”** This is a recurring fact of life.

Revelation Does Not Endorse the Worldly Status of *Kufr*

The *āyāt* of this lesson now move on to disclose the contempt that colors the psychology of the Prophet’s enemies who are primarily Allah’s enemies. It is due to this contempt and egotism that they stay away from Islam. They cannot see themselves becoming subjects of Allah (ﷻ) just like everyone else. These enemy-elites surround themselves by rules and protocols that raise them above the crowd. It does not comport with their status to champion a “political prophet” and affirm a heavenly Authority. They consider themselves as important as prophets, if not more so; and they require no reference to a higher Authority because they consider themselves to be the ultimate authority on what goes on in society. To advise them to climb down from their heights of hubris and join the people is something on the order of a joke to them. Such a psy-

chology of primacy as a birthright is what comes forth with their self-descriptive statements,

And whenever a [divine] demonstration comes to them, they say, “We shall not commit ourselves [to Allah] unless we are given the like of what Allah’s apostles were given!” (6:124).

The crowing, preening, and self-aggrandizing that comes from the affluent people in society surfaces when they have to acknowledge a person who heretofore held no title in society becomes a prophet. These upper classes of society feel they are more deserving of God and scripture than a common man — such as Muhammad (ﷺ). At the time the Qur’an was being revealed, al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah spoke out offensively against the Prophet,

If indeed there were to be a prophethood, then I am more entitled to it than you [Muhammad] are; because I am more senior than you [meaning wiser], and more affluent than you.⁶³⁸

Similarly, Abū Jahl said,

By Allah, we are not satisfied with him [Muhammad] and we will never follow him except if we were to receive revelation as he receives revelation!⁶³⁹

This makes it clear that society will have its self-serving and begrudging class of powerful people who will expect others to fall in line with them and their wishes. The members of this snobbish and self-centered class will barricade themselves within their aristocratic status, refusing to listen to those they consider to be inferior or “petty.” This is how their own psychology leads them to minimize scripture and dismiss the prophet sent to warn them. In a sense, they are the dupes of their own club mentality. Once they get to the point of spurning God by rejecting His scripture and its bearer, not

to be unexpected is their ensuing escalation to open hostility and aggressive acts of war that lash out at their prophet and his followers. In response, therefore, Allah (ﷻ) tells them that He knows whom to task with His mission and message. His knowledge leaves no gaps and needs no advice. And if they cannot understand this they bring upon themselves jeopardy, indignity, and the worst destiny,

Allah knows better where to place His divine message. Those who are guilty of crimes [by denying Him] will be inflicted with degradation coming from Allah as well as severe affliction due to their contrivances (6:124).

Of course, this Scripture, the Qur'an, and its responsibilities are essential and crucial. The meanings and motions of humans-combined-with-scripture bring Allah (ﷻ) into the soul of human society and into the social ingredients of their being. This Revelation and Scripture from Allah is the point of contact between heaven and earth. It is the liaison between the current life and the one to follow. The best expression of this merging of man's will with Allah's will was conveyed by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself.

There can be no one more qualified than Allah (ﷻ) to choose the person who is worthy of this calling. There are potentially millions and millions of individuals to choose from; and the One who is going to choose can be Allah — and only Allah. His familiarity and information about anyone exceeds infinitely whatever knowledge people may have about themselves. And when He appoints someone to this task of prophethood He does so with authority. Thus came the authoritative response to the upper classes of society who regard themselves to be more qualified, **“But Allah knows best upon whom to bestow His message.”**

This was true with all the prophets who preceded Muhammad (ﷺ) and it is true of the final Prophet. None of them were upper-class personas. They did not have a superiority complex like the upper classes, nor did they have an inferiority complex like the lower classes. They had what it took to be prophets in the full sense of the word. Nonetheless, as these aristocrats continue behaving in

disregard to Allah (ﷻ) and His choice, they should listen further, “[Such] criminals shall encounter humiliation from Allah and intensified infliction due to their machinations.” Their ignominy and disgrace at the time of absolute accountability corresponds to their arrogance when they refused to acknowledge Allah’s knowledge, when they refused to rely on revelation from their prophet, and when they abstained from standing up for their apostle. In this world, the ancient *mushrik* Arabians wanted the Prophet (ﷺ) to suffer, but in the coming world they themselves will suffer.

The lesson concludes with a set of appropriate insights as only Allah (ﷻ) can compose them,

And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, his chest He salves with a willingness to surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his chest He constricts and constricts, as if he were climbing unto the skies: it is thus that Allah inflicts horror upon those who will not commit themselves [to Him] (6:125).

In this larger picture of Allah’s authority and power, those who comply with Allah (ﷻ) as a matter of their own free and voluntary choice will find that “they breath easy.” This unencumbered and fresh relationship with Allah makes them feel like they are not constrained in any way whatsoever. They no longer feel depressed. They no longer experience disorders involving chronic feelings of sadness, lethargy, and hopelessness. They found their Authority. Gone for them are the days of major disheartening episodes involving feelings of self-hate and negativity by some, and episodes punctuated with hallucinations and delusions by others.

These bouts of psychological instability remain the share of those who choose not to affirm Allah’s authority, “**And whomever He wills to let go astray, his chest He causes to tighten and stiffen, as if he were climbing unto the skies.**” There will always be those who oppose Allah’s authority in favor of their own limited authority. Plagued are those who deny God His authority and power: plagued are they with all sorts of syndromes, disorders, and

conditions that make them feel like they are suffocating. Theirs is abnormal behavior. They act out their previously repressed feelings through specifically belligerent behavior. Their class exhibits features of character disorder — a deeply ingrained, habitual, and rigid reactionary pattern that is maladaptive and limits optimal functioning in society.

The *āyah* illustrates that those who choose to go in a godless direction in life will eventually feel — if they have any feelings left at all — as if they are asphyxiated, “**...his thorax He causes to be tight and tense, as if he were ascending into outer space.**” What was a mental choice becomes a physiological problem. The person who chooses not to yield to Allah (ﷻ), as the days and years go by, begins to experience a feeling of suffocation (failure of oxygen to reach tissues due to respiratory obstruction or altitude), or smothering in his life, “**It is thus that Allah inflicts abomination upon those who will not commit themselves [to His power and authority].**” Allah inflicts *rijs* upon those who think through their opposition to Him as the ultimate Authority and Power. This *rijs* could mean horror, torture, or it could be referring to the Tempter (Satan). Such types bring all this upon themselves; but what happens to them proceeds according to Allah’s fixed social laws that are buried in the psychology of *kāfirs* and in their distorted view of reality and history.

And undeviating is this your Sustainer’s way. Clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages [demonstrations of Our authority and power] to people who [are willing to] take them to heart! Theirs shall be an abode of peace with their Sustainer; and He shall be near them as a result of what they have been doing (6:126–127).

The movement forward in man’s life has been made clear: the approach to Allah (ﷻ) is direct and straight if only people were to respond appropriately. Should they do so, theirs shall be peace and proximity to the Sustainer and true Lord.

Apostles Hope to Postpone God's Corrective Justice

This lesson may be considered an extension of the previous one. It generally addresses itself to the two intelligent and accountable species: the jinn and the *ins* (beings made of flames and beings made of clay). It also strikes on the chords of *īmān* and *kufṛ* whose interplay is brought to light through the consequences that accrue to man's deeds. What he does in this life and world will pay off or come due in the life and world to come. The ever-present factor of Allah's power and authority is invoked in as far as He is capable of obliterating demons, their surrogates, and their people, and replacing them with others who deserve the honor of obeying Him. This alludes to the truth about man's vulnerability and weakness.

The issue of Allah's final authority cannot be shrugged away simply because Muslims of weak mettle may regard His comments on what is lawful or edible meat to be trivial. When this discourse describes the fate of demons, be they human or jinn, who argue with committed Muslims about this all-important theme of the Qur'an, it does so as a nuance of Allah's (ﷻ) leverage on earth, wherein He replaces people with more qualified others who are capable of building a better world — on His terms. This would, by necessity, mean that people or societies lose their leading positions due to their failures in recognizing Him and following through with His commands. These errant societies typically get an ultimatum from Him before they trigger their own downfall. Allah's opportunity came their way, but they refused to grasp the moment and to move forward in light of prophet and scripture,

- (6:128) **And on the Day when He shall gather them [all] together, [He will say], “O you who have lived in close communion as invisible beings! A great many [other] human beings have you ensnared!” And those of the humans who were close to them will say, “O our Sustainer! We did enjoy one another's fellowship [in life]; but [now that] we have reached the end of our term — the term You have laid down for us — [we see the error of our ways]!” He will say, “The**

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ قَدْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ وَقَالَ
 أَوْلِيَائُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي
 أَجَلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ
 رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ
 يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتِي وَيُذَرُّونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا
 شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّبْنَاهُمْ حَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
 أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ ذَلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُنْ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ
 بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غٰفِلُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا
 رَبُّكَ بِغٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْعَظِيمُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ
 إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَأْ كَمَا
 أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ قَوْمٍ ءٰخِرِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ إِنْ مَا
 تُوعَدُونَ لَآتٍ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا
 عَلَىٰ مَكَاتِبِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ
 عَقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

Fire shall be your abode therein to abide — unless Allah wills it otherwise.” Verily, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.

- (6:129) And in this manner do We cause evildoers to seduce one another by means of their [evil] doings.
- (6:130) [And thus will Allah continue], “O you who have lived in close communion as invisible beings and [like-minded] humans! Have there not come to you apostles from among yourselves, who conveyed to you My messages [of power and authority] and warned you of the coming of this your Day [of Judgement]?” They will answer, “We do bear witness against ourselves!” — for the life of this world had beguiled them: and so they will bear witness against themselves that they had been denying the truth [pertaining to Allah’s power and authority].
- (6:131) And so it is that your Sustainer would never destroy a community for its wrongdoing so long as its people are still unaware [of the meaning of right and wrong]:
- (6:132) For all shall be judged according to their [conscientious] deeds — and your Sustainer is not unaware of what they do.
- (6:133) And your Sustainer alone is self-sufficient, limitless in His grace. If He so wills, He may put an end to you and thereafter cause whom He wills to succeed you — even as He has brought you into being out of other people’s seed.
- (6:134) Verily, that [reckoning] you are promised is bound to come, and you cannot elude it!
- (6:135) Say [O Prophet], “O my [skeptical] people! Do yet all that may be within your power, [while] I, behold, shall labor [in Allah’s way]: and in time you will come to know to whom the future belongs. Verily, never will evildoers be successful” (al-An‘ām:128–135).

The end of the previous lesson was witness to how those who comply with Allah (ﷻ) in this world will proceed to an abode of eternal peace and proximity with Allah, as their bosoms were receptive and open to Him and His Prophet (ﷺ). In this lesson, the future

is exhibited to the reader when the rascals of jinns and humans — those who spent their earthly existence living off false images, half-truths, media fantasies, and straight-out deceptions and lies — are brought forth for accountability on the Day of Judgement. If these two had anything in common during a tangled human history it was their confrontation to prophets and hostility toward apostles. They produced volumes of information and libraries of books to argue with prophets in their attempt to knock down Allah's words, logic, and guidance. These pitiful creatures come alive through these scenes from the Day of Judgement in this sacred Text,

On a Day when He assembles all of them [saying], “O commune of jinn, you expected too much from humans.” And then their [the jinn] human allies said, “Our Sustainer! Some of us took advantage of others. And now we have reached the fate You have held up for us.” He said, “The Fire is your den where you will dwell forever — except what Allah wills [as an exception].” Certainly your Sustainer is wise and abreast of [all things].

In this manner We subordinate oppressors to each other due to the results of their behavior [as society's decision makers]. [And thus Allah continued], “O folks — humans and jinn — have their not come to you from your own selves messengers who outlined for you My messages [of power]? And who advised you about the encounter of this Day?” They said, “We bear witness against our own selves” — for they were lured by the moment of life, and they testified against their own selves [saying] they were deniers [of Allah's power and authority] (6:128–130).

Here, Allah (ﷻ) is giving the committed Muslims access to the future. At a particular point in time on the Final Day, the jinn and their human associates will actually speak out to express the things they concealed when they were back there in their previous

earthly life. Their testimony begins when Allah (ﷻ) says, speaking first to the jinn, **“O community of jinn! A great many [other] humans you have entrapped!”**

This would mean that in man’s earthly life, the (evil) jinn were in forward positions vis-à-vis humans, giving the former (the jinn) a position of influence over the latter. Human beings apparently fell for whatever the jinn had laid out for them, that is, they were affected in negative ways. This will come as no surprise to the jinn; they are aware of their crimes against mankind. That is why they have nothing to say in the final accounting.

At this point on the Day of Judgement, the human compatriots of the evil jinn will come forward with their own response,

And those human allies [of the jinn] spoke out and said, “O our Sustainer! We did enjoy one another’s fellowship [in the life of the world]; but [now that] we have reached the end of our term — the term that You have laid down for us — [we see the error of our ways]!” (6:128).

This confession discloses how susceptible and frail human beings are in comparison to the jinn. It also explains how Satan has the capacity to utilize “trans-species inroads” (from jinn to human). These human collaborators with the jinn actually enjoyed being coaxed or charmed into positions displeasing to Allah (ﷻ) via wrongheaded ideas or heartbreaking feelings. The end result of such an errant direction has always been error and insubordination, be it obvious or obscure. The human confession, **“we enjoyed each other’s fellowship...”** illustrates how Satan got involved. The word *enjoyed* indicates that Satan was working on the lusts and desires that cause man to slip and sin. However, is it possible for them to be content when they say, **“...but now we have reached the end of our term that You have timed for us!”**? Where can they go from here? Unfortunately for them, this is the end of the road, **“He [Allah] said, ‘The Fire shall be your domain therein to abide, unless Allah wills it otherwise...’”**

It is hard to understand how intelligent forms of life disregard Allah (ﷻ) in this life and then wind up in the fire, to endure therein forever. What it means to “live” in the fire, and not die, appears to be beyond human comprehension. But what is clear is that the crazy acts in this world breed the perilous and unending results in the world approaching. If people have a hard time understanding this, then they should realize that their faculties are limited, and that there is One whose powers are beyond comprehension, **“Indeed, your Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.”**

Lest someone think that this conversation includes all jinn and all humans, the narrative corrects such impression, **“And in this manner do we cause oppressors to seduce one another by means of their achievements.”** The camaraderie of oppression includes both the jinn and humans. Both may be allies against their “common enemy” — in this case, God’s apostles and prophets, and their disciples and students. Oppression and injustice are initiated when man declines the authority of Allah (ﷻ). That is when the fall of a social order begins. From there on the deleterious effects come at a rapidly accelerating rate. And if oppression and injustice are trans-species, they are most certainly trans-race, transnational, transgender, and trans-ethnic.

In today’s and yesterday’s world, the chumminess of communists, capitalists, Zionists, and imperialists manifests itself anywhere in the world where Muslims and oppressed peoples try to stand up for their rights and fight for their lives. Centuries of anti-Islamic animus have come together to launch wars of colonization and economic strangulation whenever there is an Islamic movement on the horizon. There are interlocking financial interests and cultural prejudices that cannot tolerate seeing independent and liberated Muslims, **“And in this manner do We cause oppressors to seduce one another by means of their acquisitions.”** But even with everything they do to damage, injure, and wage wars, all of that lies within what Allah (ﷻ) will permit and inhibit, **“And unless Allah willed it they would not have been able to do that [harm, damage, or warfare] so leave them to their intrigues” (6:137).** These are comforting words for committed Muslims who are trying to live up

to their responsibilities, but they offer no reassurance to those “Muslims” who abdicate their duties and higher call of obligation.

Societies Are Not Punished until They Actively Deny God

[And thus will Allah continue], “O community of jinn and humans! Have you not been approached by apostles from among you who elaborate on My illustration [of power and authority] and who warn you of the coming of this Day?” They replied, “We bear witness against ourselves”; and they were enticed by [the leisure] of worldly life, and they bore witness against their own selves saying they were in denial [of Allah] (6:130).

This delivery of divine information is to both the jinn and humans. That Allah (ﷻ) sent messengers to the jinn as He did to humans is known to Him alone as He knows the details of this invisible species. However, the Qur’anic text does indicate that the jinn had access and were privy to human prophets and apostles (ﷺ). They could communicate to their own kind, per the *āyāt* in *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf*, what they heard from the apostles sent to man,

And lo! We caused a group of unseen beings to incline toward you [O Muhammad], so that they might give ear to the Qur’an; and so, as soon as they became aware of it, they said [to one another], “Listen in silence!” And when [the recitation] was ended, they returned to their multitudes as warners.

They said, “O our folks! Behold, we have been listening to a revelation bestowed from on high after [that of] Moses, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of the Torah]: it guides toward the truth, and onto a straight track. O our folks! Respond to Allah’s call, and make a secure commitment to Him: He will forgive you [whatever is past] of your sins, and

deliver you from grievous suffering [in the life to come]. But he who does not respond to Allah’s call can never elude [Him] on earth, nor can he have any patrons against Him [in the life to come]: all such are most obviously lost in error” (46:29–32).

Whether the jinn had their own prophets or they “tuned in” to human prophets will probably remain a question that has no definite answer. To argue this point is useless. The bottom line is that they, along with their human allies, testified against their own selves,

And they said, “We testify against our own selves” — for they were attracted by the [comforts of this] worldly life; and they testified against their own selves [saying] they were indeed *kāfirs* (6:130).

They did not even have anything to say besides bringing the court down on their own heads.

In a few more relevant thoughts on the jinn, as part of the Muslims’ commitment to Allah (ﷻ), the latter understand that there is much more to reality than the limited amount they can perceive with their senses, that is, the *ghayb* lies beyond the domain of human perception, as has already been noted. Hence, for Muslims, intelligent beings of an invisible character, the jinn, who exist in this vast *ghayb* are not hard to accept. In normal circumstances, ordinary people cannot perceive them with material sensory inputs. What substantiates human confidence in the existence of the jinn are Allah’s words in the Qur’an as well as the Prophet’s descriptive statements. On the strength of these two references, there should be no doubt in anyone’s mind.

Rationally speaking, beings who are not perceptible by human physical senses do not violate the norms of intelligence. In other words, there is nothing the human mind can concoct that can logically argue against the existence of the jinn. Thus, if someone were to refute the obvious references to the jinn in the Qur’an and Sunnah, then he would be doing so without rational validity. Individuals

who controvert the reality of the jinn are either ignorant or deniers of information coming from Allah (ﷻ).

In *Sūrah*s *al-Dhāriyāt* and *al-Raḥmān*, Allah says some things pertaining to both humans and the jinn,

And I have not created the jinn and man except that they conform to Me. I need no sustenance from them, nor do I need them to feed [Me] (51:56–57);

O community of jinn and man! If you are able to go beyond the frontiers of the heavens and earth, [then] do so; you will go beyond [those frontiers] only with dominance [and authorization from Allah] (55:33).

The Qur'an mentions the jinn in some 40 *āyāt* contained in ten of its *sūrah*s. *Sūrah al-Jinn*, the 72nd *sūrah*, is named after the jinn. In it, Allah (ﷻ) informs man of a contingent of jinn who listened to the Qur'an being recited by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. As a consequence these jinn committed themselves to Allah and then went back to their own kind to break the news to them. A few *āyāt* from *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf* (46:29–32), cited earlier, corroborate this fact.

Some historical references suggest that this contingent of jinn came from one of two locations: either Diyār Bakr in the northern Levant or from Nineveh, near today's al-Mūṣal (Mosul) in northern Iraq. This writer cannot vouch for the authenticity of this information, especially since the jinn may not be exclusively earthly creatures, and hence, their place of residence may not necessarily be a human geographical location.

In the books of Sunnah and *Sīrah* it is said that the jinn came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was praying *Ṣalāh al-Fajr* at al-Nakhlāh, a place southeast of Makkah in the direction of al-Ṭā'if, about one night's journey from Makkah. In this particular encounter, the Prophet, who was reading either *Sūrah al-'Alaq* or *Sūrah al-Raḥmān* (depending on the narration), was not aware of their presence. So his recitation of the Qur'an was not meant for them, even though they could hear him while he could not perceive them.⁶⁴⁰

According to what information exists in hadith literature, the Prophet (ﷺ) is said to have encountered the jinn about six times in his life. One of the narratives, which is regarded with approval and favor (*mutawātir*), relates that the Prophet went out in what is called the “night of the jinn.” Accompanying him on this occasion was Ibn Mas‘ūd, who was instructed by the Prophet to stay at a particular spot and to not go beyond it. The Prophet then walked away to a distance, though still visible to Ibn Mas‘ūd. The jinn then huddled together around the Prophet, who recited the Qur’an to them and called them to Islam. When he finished, they went back to their own kind, bringing good news and words of advice.⁶⁴¹ In another report, Ibn Mas‘ūd stated, “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, ‘I stayed the night reading [the Qur’an] to the jinn as I stood at al-Ḥujūn.’”⁶⁴²

This information is not common knowledge in the Judeo-Christian or in the materialist secularist worlds. Whenever they encounter unknown forms of life they appear to be dumbfounded. In their vocabulary, such phenomena are sometimes described as “apparitions.” An *apparition* is the visual experience of seeing a person or animal (either living or dead) not actually present. The term *crisis apparition* is applied if the person or animal seen is experiencing a crisis at the time, such as death or injury. In such an uninformed but nonetheless self-absorbed world, haunting apparitions, such as ghosts, traditionally have been considered spirits of the dead, although skeptics have long had doubts. In Shakespeare’s time, one of his characters could reasonably dismiss a ghost as “but our fantasy.” And Charles Dickens reflected a Victorian view when his Ebenezer Scrooge attributed a phantom to an upset stomach, accusing the ghost of being “an undigested bit of beef.”⁶⁴³

For the past century or more, however, students of the paranormal have been diligently seeking other explanations. None of their theories has satisfied skeptics, however, who insist that most alleged haunting phenomena are unsubstantiated anyway. But although the proposed explanations have not been proved by whatever “verification” methods are currently available, some have a certain ring of reasonableness that keeps them alive. The basic el-

ements of a few of those speculations (or theories), along with the older, Spiritualist belief are given below.⁶⁴⁴

Spiritualists believe that the soul leaves the body at death. Under certain circumstances, this spirit may tarry on earth instead of proceeding to the Other Side and thus may be observed as a ghost. Italian psychical researcher Ernesto Bozzano put a new twist on this explanation with his “spiritistic” theory. Apparitions, Bozzano proposed, are not the souls of the dead, but rather telepathic messages from their lingering bodiless minds, which he said have many of the characteristics usually attributed to spirits.⁶⁴⁵

Some say an eye both projects and observes a ghost’s image; the mind of a percipient may create the very apparition that it perceives, according to American parapsychologist William G. Roll. Roll accepts that stored psychic traces from the past can evoke apparitions. But he contends that in many cases the percipient’s mental state plays an active role, unconsciously creating haunting phenomena to satisfy emotional needs. Others maintain that an apparition emerges from a wall where it has been stored as a trace of psychic energy. According to this speculation, first posited by the researcher Eleanor Sidgwick, objects absorb psychic impressions and then broadcast them back to people who enter the vicinity. Clarity of the resulting apparition or other phenomena depends on the emotional force of the original psychic imprint and the psychic sensitivity of the percipient. A third group says that the *ether* is something intermediate between mind and matter, that exists in a dimension(s) unknown to human beings. It is this ether, not the human physical environment, that records psychic impressions and plays them back to psychically sensitive people. The committed thank Allah (ﷻ) for sparing them much of these suppositions and conjectures.⁶⁴⁶

At this point, the Qur’an immediately stirs the attention of the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims who were with him — and by extension all people. Concerning these self-condemned types, Allah (ﷻ) does not dispense punishment upon a society or people before they are put on notice. Even if there were a society guilty of *shirk* or *zulm*, it would not be put on the track to self-destruction while its conscience was not opposed to Allah in

an intentional and cognizant way. As a measure of his mercy and amnesty, He sends them demonstrations of His authority and power, and cautions them not to clash with Him, **“And so it is that your Sustainer would never destroy any society for its wrongdoing so long as its people are still unaware [of the conflict between *īmān* and *kufr*].”**

A key expression of Allah’s mercy is that He does not upend societies that are in sin and error until He sends them messengers and apostles. Even though within the essence of human nature there is always an inclination toward Him, this human nature itself may become awkward in spite of the force of rationality and common sense that serve to protect it in its God-given shape. The human mind itself may cave in to temptations and sin; human societies have a way of subverting their God-given disposition toward divine authority.

Prophets and messengers were meant to salvage human nature and to rescue the human mind from rejection and deviation. If societies, however, end up rebuffing these prophets and their scriptures/messages, then the former become exposed and susceptible to Allah’s sentence and retributive justice. The dispatch of apostles and divine guidance — that is, the attempts to realign a wavering society to the divine power culture before it self-destructs — point to Allah’s mercy. Human societies fail when their God-given “state-of-nature” is no longer intact and their ideas are not attuned with reality and the Generator of that reality: Allah (ﷻ).

At the end of the day, even after Allah’s messengers (ﷺ) have set things aright, whether it was before or after a society was destroyed, people will ultimately be judged for what they purposefully and intentionally do, **“...for all shall be judged according to their [conscious] deeds — and your Sustainer is not unaware of what they do.”** Committed Muslims are of varying ranks, higher or lower. So is the case with evil people. The final criterion bears down on what people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, do, **“And your Sustainer is not oblivious of what they do.”**

To reinforce a point that cannot be overemphasized, Allah (ﷻ) is in no need of people; He is sufficient unto Himself and is

not obliged to them, their commitment, or their conformity. Nonetheless, He sends apostles and messengers as an expression of His mercy and compassion. When people do what is right they do so to their advantage in this life and in the afterlife. In a sense, Allah's mercy is a continuum, spanning from the past to the future, for "every saint has a past and every sinner has a future." His mercy and compassion extend to a "tolerance" of wrongdoers, evildoers, and oppressors, even though He is capable, if He so wills, of putting an immediate end to them forthwith, and bringing about another generation in their stead,

And your Sustainer alone is self-sufficient, limitless in His grace. If He wants He can do away with you and bring in your stead whomever He wills — as He has spawned you from a posterity of other people (6:133).

Man's power indulgence causes him to blank out when it comes to Allah's power. Man wants to forget that power has always been Allah's and will always be His, and that man's power-possession is both ephemeral and transitory. Man will never have the enduring and unending power that Allah (ﷻ) has. Each generation possessing power goes through a revolving door, only to watch a future generation come into possession of its own power. Besides, the power of man is minuscule compared to Allah's epoch-making and larger-than-life power.

These words are directed to those humans who want to join the "gods" when they become intoxicated by power. Humans and jinn who are abusive and harsh in their exercise of power may do themselves a favor by tuning in to the meanings herein. Their philosophies, principles, and parties of *zulm* cannot go far; as a matter of fact, they cannot go anywhere as Allah's presence is overwhelming and His power decisive. All their attempts to override or throw out Allah's system and replace it with their own man-made contrivances will eventually fail. They have to understand they are in Allah's hands, and they cannot escape their God-defined destiny even if they were to pool all their forces and potentials. All of what

they undertake toward this end, prompted by feelings of prowess, is done within a lifetime that is incrementally diminishing. Committed Muslims may take comfort in the fact that these “superpowers” are powerless, short-lived, and inconsequential when compared to Allah (ﷻ) — even when they have weapons of mass destruction, space-war contraptions, and an alliance with the jinn of their ilk.

Can these words of truth and divinity, “**Verily, that [reckoning] you are promised is bound to come, and you cannot elude it,**” penetrate those minds of domination and those hearts of hubris? When man comes “full-circle” on the Day of Accountability, he will be facing that reckoning. No temporal or other power will be able to dodge that inevitability. They will not be able to talk it away, theorize it away, or philosophize it away. It is coming — for Allah’s words are certain and their secular and material propaganda is conjecture.

The lesson ends with a forceful message for all *mushriks* and their power setup,

Say, “My people! Do what corresponds to your status, for certainly I will. And in time, you will come to know who shall inherit the land; for He shall not give success to oppressors” (6:135).

This is an ultimatum from the Prophet (ﷺ) to those who have made up their minds to stay on a worldly self-destructive course of blind power pursuit wrapped up in secular mental attitudes, oppressive political orientations, and exclusivist bloc solidarity. Therefore, on one side is *kufri*, and on the other side is the stark truth (*ḥaqq*), which needs no help standing on its own. The confidence gained by being with the *ḥaqq* makes it possible to draw the line between oppressive power centers and the subjects of Allah (ﷻ). So the Prophet (ﷺ), in taking the first step (as leaders normally do), forced the issue, pressing his people to choose between two irreconcilable ambitions: the pursuit of power for worldly “gains” and the pursuit of power as attendants for Allah. The former should realize, “**Certainly, never will oppressors be fortunate.**”

Repeating an *āyah* in a general and unconnected way does not get anyone excited or motivated to hostility. But when someone tries to fill in the blanks, such as defining and naming oppressors, then the struggle begins. Too many Muslim generations have elapsed without beginning the long since absent effort of identifying and listing such oppressors. The world now is full of them, yet very few thinking Muslims are willing and able to call them out by their names.

Man-Made Rules Attributed to God Are Fraudulent

The defining issue in the history of prophets and peoples, and in the history of scriptures and societies has always been about the identity of the ultimate and final authority. The peoples of ancient Arabia never denied the existence of Allah (ﷻ) per se, and they never considered anyone or anything on par with Him. Those Arabians, however, were in the habit of designating lesser or inferior deities beside God. They adopted these low-level or junior-grade deities to act as intercessors or “catalysts” between man and God. This is where they committed the cardinal sin of degrading and depraving the essential status of God. And so, from this point, the natural next step for them was to appoint a religious (and ultimately, elitist) class of people who would legalize traditions and moralize laws, and who would, in a sense, act in the stead of God; hence what they said was regarded to have been sanctioned by God Himself. They had not become as offensive and obnoxious as today’s deniers of God who literally and practically “dump” God, replacing Him with their own selves.

Aspects of human beings taking the place of God exhibit as the inherited pattern of thought and action pertaining to produce, fruits, and vegetation, as well as cattle and livestock, some of which were allocated for God and others for their deities and “sub-gods,”

And whatever is allocated [by them] to their God-competing deities does not reach Allah, but whatever is allocated [by them] to Allah reaches their God-competing deities (6:136).

They also dedicated their own children, particularly their girls, to these deities of their own invention. Going yet further, they enacted laws that set aside livestock and plants for the deities, and no one was allowed (under threat of punishment) to consume such offerings. Designating themselves “authorities” on this matter, they not only defined the parameters of the “law” but also adjudicated its violation. Some of this went as far as their declaring certain

load-bearing animals sacred, hence these beasts of burden could not be ridden. On some animals, they would not permit Allah's name to be mentioned at the time of slaughter — and this, they would say, is Allah's instruction. Certain pregnant animals were set aside to be consumed only by men and boys, but not by women and girls, the one exception being that if the animal's gestation produced a stillborn, then the women would be permitted to partake of the flesh of that postpartum female. They would also say that a dead animal was lawful to eat because death is an act of God, just like the permission to slaughter (*dhabīḥah*). This whole body of disjointed and forged social customs has been chronicled for future generations so that they can see how terribly wrong man can go once he begins to depart from Allah (ﷻ).

The details of these *āyāt* demonstrate how man has the capacity to mislead himself through the agency of traditions, cultures, and all the accumulated knowledge and entrenched values shared by a particular erring society. Lurking behind these subtle and time-entrenched tastes in the arts, manners, and laws is Satan, the avowed enemy of man who kicks off this deviation from Allah (ﷻ) in a penetrative, yet light-handed way,

Those who are *mushriks* [in action] will say, “Had Allah willed [it] we would not have been [active] *mushriks*, nor would our forefathers [have been *mushriks*], and we would not have proscribed a thing.” It is in this manner that those aforesaid had misrepresented [things] — until they had a taste of Our tenacity. Say, “Are you in possession of knowledge that you may produce for us? You follow only conjecture; and you but venture an opinion.” Say, “To Allah [belongs] the overwhelming evidence; and had He willed it He would have guided all of you.”

Say, “Present your witnesses who will testify that Allah has rendered this [and this] unlawful.” And if they do testify do not testify with them. And do not follow the tendencies of those who are at odds with

Our [power] manifestations, and those who are not certain [and committed] to the end-life, and those who equate [others] with their Sustainer (6:148–150).

Law is the morality of society. If Allah (ﷻ) is excluded from being the one who shapes society's morality, then this space is left open to powerful individuals and influential personalities who will automatically put themselves in position to permit and inhibit. Such people have never wanted to be constrained in any way, shape, or form by any standard of justice, and so they choose to do away with these constraints by doing away with God. However, should there be any basis for this human substitution for God, then its advocates should bring forth those who can testify toward this end.

- (6:136) And out of whatever He has created of the fruits of the field and the cattle, they assign unto Allah a portion, saying, “This belongs to Allah” — or so they [falsely] claim — “and this is for those beings who, we are convinced, have a share in His divinity.” But that which is assigned to the beings associated in their minds with God does not bring [them] closer to Allah, whereas that which is assigned to Allah brings [them but] closer to those beings to whom they ascribe a share in His divinity. Bad, indeed, is their judgement!
- (6:137) And, likewise, their belief in beings or powers that are supposed to have a share in God's divinity makes [even] the slaying of their children seem goodly to many of those who ascribe divinity to any beside God, thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith. Yet, unless Allah had so willed, they would not be doing all this: stand, therefore, aloof from them and all their false imagery!
- (6:138) And they say, “Such and such cattle and fruits of the field are sacred; none may eat thereof save those whom we will [to do so]” — so they [falsely] claim; and [they declare that] it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain kinds of cattle; and there are cattle over which they do not pronounce Allah's name — falsely attributing [the origin of

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا
 فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرِزْقِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا فَمَا كَانَ
 لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ
 يَصِلُ إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾
 وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ
 أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَقَالُوا
 هَذِهِ أَنْعَمُ وَحَرَّتْ حِجْرٌ لَا يَطْعُمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءَ بِرِزْقِهِمْ
 وَأَنْعَمُ حَرِّمَتْ ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَمُ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ أَسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً
 عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا
 فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَى
 أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِنْ يَكُن مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ
 وَصَفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا
 أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى
 اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ

جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرِ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ
 وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۚ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ
 إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَءَاتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ ۗ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاءٌ كُلُوا مِمَّا
 رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوبَ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾
 ثَمَنِيَّةً أَزْوَاجًا ۗ مِنَ الضَّانِّ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ
 ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ
 نَبِيُّنِي يَعْلَمُ ۖ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ
 الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ
 عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۖ إِذْ وَصَّيَكُمُ اللَّهُ
 بِهَذَا ۖ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ
 عِلْمٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا
 أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ ۖ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا
 مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ۚ
 فَمَنْ أَضْطَرَّ غَيْرَ بَاعٍ وَلَا عَادٍ ۖ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَعَلَى

الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ^ط وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ
 حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوِ الْحَوَايَا
 أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ^ط ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَهُمْ بِبِعْيِهِمْ^ط وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فَإِن
 كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَسِعَتْ وَلَا يُرْدُ بِأَسْءُ عَنِ
 الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا
 أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ^ط كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى دَاوُوا بِأَسْنًا^ط قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
 فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا^ط إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾
 قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَلِيغَةُ^ط فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْتُكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلْ هَلُمَّ
 شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا^ط فَإِن شَهِدُوا فَلَا
 تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ^ط وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا
 حَرَّمَ رَبِّي^ط عَلَيْكُمْ^ط إِلَّا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ^ط شَيْئًا^ط وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا^ط
 وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ^ط مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ^ط نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ^ط وَإِيَّاهُمْ^ط وَلَا
 تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ^ط وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ

الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَا
 تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا
 الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا
 قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ
 وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمًا
 فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ
 وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

these customs] to Him. [But] He will requite them for all their false imagery.

- (6:139) And they say, “All that is in the wombs of such and such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our women; but if it be stillborn, then both may have their share thereof.” [Allah] will requite them for all they [falsely] attribute [to Him]: behold, He is wise, all-knowing.
- (6:140) Lost, indeed, are those who, in their weak-minded ignorance, slay their children and declare as forbidden that which Allah has provided for them as sustenance, falsely ascribing [such prohibitions] to Allah: they have gone astray and have not found the right path.
- (6:141) For it is He who has brought into being gardens — the cultivated ones and those growing wild — and the date-palm, and fields bearing multiform produce, and the olive tree,

and the pomegranate: [all] resembling one another and yet so different! Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition, and give [to the poor] their due on harvest day. And do not waste [Allah's bounties]: verily, He does not love the wasteful!

- (6:142) And of the cattle reared for work and for the sake of their flesh, eat whatever Allah has provided for you as sustenance, and follow not Satan's footsteps: behold, he is your open foe!
- (6:143) [His followers would have it that, in certain cases, any of these] four kinds of cattle of either sex [is unlawful to man]: either of the two sexes of sheep and of goats. Ask [them], "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me what you know in this respect, if what you say is true."
- (6:144) And [likewise they declare as unlawful] either of the two sexes of camels and of bovine cattle. Ask [them], "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Is it, perchance, that you [yourselves] were witnesses when Allah enjoined [all] this upon you?" And who could be more wicked than he who, without any [real] knowledge, attributes his own lying inventions to Allah, and thus leads people astray? Behold, Allah does not grace [such] evildoing folk with His guidance.
- (6:145) Say [O Prophet], "In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine — for that, behold, is loathsome — or a sinful offering over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked. But if one is driven by necessity — neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need — then [know that], behold, your Sustainer is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (6:146) And [only] to those who followed the Jewish faith did We forbid all beasts that have claws; and We forbade to them the fat of both oxen and sheep, excepting that which is

in their backs or entrails or that which is within the bone: thus did We requite them for their evildoing — for, behold, We are true to Our word!”⁶⁴⁷

- (6:147) And if they give you the lie, say, “Limitless is your Sustainer in His grace; but His punishment shall not be averted from people who are lost in sin.”
- (6:148) Those who are bent on ascribing divinity/authority to any beside God will say, “Had Allah so willed, we would not have ascribed divinity/authority to any but Him, nor would our forefathers [have done so]; and neither would we have declared as forbidden anything [that He has allowed].” Even so did those who lived before them give the lie to the truth — until they came to taste Our punishment! Say, “Have you any [certain] knowledge that you could proffer to us? You follow but [other people’s] conjectures, and you yourselves do nothing but guess.”
- (6:149) Say, “[Know], then, that the final evidence [of all truth] rests with Allah alone; and had He so willed, He would have guided you all aright.”
- (6:150) Say, “Bring forward your witnesses who could testify that Allah has forbidden [all] this!” — and if they bear witness [falsely], do not bear witness with them; and do not follow the errant views of those who have given the lie to Our messages, nor of those who are not confident of the life to come, and who regard other powers as their Sustainer’s equals!
- (6:151) Say, “Come, let me convey to you what your Sustainer has [really] forbidden to you: do not ascribe divinity/authority, in any way, to any beside Him; and [do not offend against but, rather] do good to your parents; and do not kill your children for fear of poverty — [for] it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them; and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being’s life — [the life] that Allah has declared to be sacred — otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice: this has He enjoined upon you so that you might use your reason;

- (6:152) “And do not touch the substance of an orphan — save to improve it — before he comes of age. And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight, with equity: [however], We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear; and when you voice an opinion, be just, even though it be [against] one near of kin. And [always] observe your bond with Allah: this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might keep it in mind.
- (6:153) “And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way. [All] this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might remain conscious [of His power presence and overpowering authority]” (al-An‘ām:136–153).

In this long stretch of *āyāt* containing a detailed lesson, the reader needs to recall that this discourse was revealed in Makkah, before the laws and legislation characteristic of the Madinan period, and before the Muslims had a state or a power base of their own. When these Makkan *āyāt* were revealed, the Muslims were not arguing, theorizing, or researching the legal or formal extension of Islam. They were, to put it candidly, struggling for survival.

The central theme of the *sūrah* and of man’s subordinate status — that Allah (ﷻ) is the source of authority and the origin of allegiance — is intertwined throughout all the details of the subthematic elements. Casting a general view of this lesson reveals a counter-Qur’anic system called *jāhiliyah* that had its norms and policies regarding agriculture, livestock, and population. These norms and policies unfolded along the following lines.

Firstly, provisions and subsistence were of two categories: one dedicated to Allah (ﷻ), which the rulers and elites claimed was sanctioned by Him, and the other allocated to their contenders with God. These were the idols or their equivalents that were deified by the pre-Islamic Arabians,

**And they allocated a portion of what Allah has sprung
of produce and livestock saying [incorrectly] such and**

such an amount belongs to Allah, and such and such an amount belongs to our lesser deities (6:136).

Secondly, the portion allocated by them to Allah (ﷻ) would then be vitiated by their reallocating some of what was supposed to be His to the lesser gods. This would not go in the other direction, that is, they would not reallocate what belongs to the lesser gods to Allah Himself.

Thirdly, with prompting from their lesser gods (*shurakā'*), they would kill their own children. The lesser gods in this case were their legislators and religious officials — the same people who are in charge of cultural norms and legal standards in all godless societies. The rationale for killing their children or coming as close as possible to aborting them would be poverty or the lack of resources. The ritual infanticide of that time may have also had something to do with religious superstition. In most instances, if not all, the killing would claim the lives of the girls in fear of poverty or shame. At times of vows, the boys would be the sacrifice of choice,

And, likewise, their belief in beings or powers that are supposed to have a share in God's divinity makes [even] the slaying of their children seem goodly to many of those who ascribe divinity to any beside God, thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith (6:137).

Fourthly, some livestock and produce were considered “off limits.” They claimed that in order to make off-limit livestock and produce edible, they would need a special dispensation from God. In addition to disallowing certain animals from being mounted, they also outlawed the invocation of Allah's name at the time of slaughter or at the time of their riding some of these animals. Or they simply would not ride these animals at the Hajj claiming that the Hajj is a time of God-consciousness. To legitimize all of these practices, they claimed that it came from Allah's sanction,

And they say, “Such-and-such cattle and fruits of the field are sacred; none may eat thereof save those whom we will [to do so]” — so they [falsely] claim; and [they declare that] it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain kinds of cattle; and there are cattle over which they do not pronounce Allah’s name — falsely attributing [the origin of these customs] to Him (6:138).

Fifthly, they designated some embryonic animals that were born alive to be only edible (after slaughter) by males (men and boys), but not by women and girls. But if the gestation produced a stillborn fetus, then it became permissible as food for both males and females. These laughable “traditions” were attributed by them to God,

And they say, “All that is in the wombs of such and such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our women; but if it be stillborn, then both may have their share thereof.” [Allah] will requite them for all they [falsely] attribute [to Him]: behold, He is wise, all-knowing (6:139).

As one should expect, the *āyāt* of the Qur’an are clear in condemning those who kill their children and prohibit food that has been made lawful by Allah (ﷻ). There are no justifications whatsoever for this type of behavior or culture. The Qur’an reiterates a basic fact of life: it is Allah who provides resources and supplements, which people mismanage and waste; who gives orchards, groves, and cultivated land; and who creates livestock and farm animals for people to utilize and consume. He who provides is He who owns. Thus, what He offers to people can only be regulated by Him.

When people enact such farcical laws or customs pertaining to livestock and cattle, they are only pointing to how silly and pathetic they truly are. Their cultural and communal perceptions are pitiful and foolish, even bizarre and preposterous. And so, given what they were doing, Allah (ﷻ) asked them what criteria they used to come

up with these social norms and regulations, **“Is it, perchance, that you [yourselves] were witnesses when Allah enjoined [all] this upon you?”** Perhaps they considered themselves to be privy to this information because God “chose” them in exclusion to others. Regardless, they solicited shame upon themselves for the fabrications they attributed to God and for misleading the common people.

After going over what is lawful to Muslims and what was unlawful to Jews but became less restricted for Muslims, Allah’s words spotlight the refrain of every *jāhiliyah* that has ever existed in history, **“Had Allah so willed, we would not have ascribed divinity to any but Him, nor would our ancestors [have done so].”** Those who fail Allah (ﷻ) by denying Him consistently and persistently invoke these thoughts until a much deserved penalty brings them back to the mean of God consciousness, **“Even so did those who lived before them give the lie to the truth — until they came to taste our punishment.”**

Had they any evidence for their claims, they would have been the first to come forward with it, **“Say, ‘Have you any [certain] knowledge you could proffer us? ...bring forward your witnesses who could bear witness that Allah has forbidden [all] this!’”** Allah (ﷻ), however, tells them what He truly prohibited. And this challenge is what alludes to, once again, the fundamental fact of life as it pertains to social life, social equality, and social justice.

Allah (ﷻ) has prohibited *shirk*, the allocation of power and authority to anyone or anything less than Him. He ordered people to maintain an ideal behavior toward parents. He throttled them from killing their children because of poverty, promising them provisions and sustenance for their helpless infants. He prevented them from offensive behavior and offending intent. He barred them from taking a sacrosanct human life, except as a matter of justice. He held orphan assets to be inviolate, not to be appropriated by anyone, except in matters of necessity, but safely secured until the orphan matures and takes charge of his own affairs. He ordered fairness in all market activities and practices. Justice was to become the central feature of speech, testimony, and judgement, even if that meant breaking with clan or family solidarity. Allah’s covenant

was to be honored in all circumstances. Following these instructions about human communal life, He says,

And [know] that this is the way leading straight to Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way. [All] this has He counseled you with, so that you might remain conscious [of His power presence and overpowering authority] (6:153).

The Islamic *dīn* balances and equates its convictions with its social justice priorities. Authority is both a matter of conviction and a matter of social justice. Social justice comes from a conviction centered on the sole authority of Allah (ﷻ). It becomes a fact of life when Allah's authority is the guiding beacon of the community and population.

This fact has been dislodged from the public mind of Muslims throughout many generations and centuries of inactivity and slavery to the powers that be. Islam does not partition Allah's authority so that it applies in one mode to the individual and in another to the society. Reintroducing the subject of divine authority into the Muslim public discourse has grown into a monumental task, as the run-of-the-mill Muslim no longer thinks in a way that consolidates and integrates Allah's authority, as it is meant to be. One can speak about *ṣalāh* and Hajj as "integral" parts of Islam, but he cannot speak about authority and power in the same way without being accused of inserting into Islam things that are alien. Going unnoticed by millions of Muslims, a monarch or a president can play fast and loose with the issues of authority and power in a majority Muslim country. And he can get away with this fundamental violation of Allah's commanding power presence because the ordinary Muslims, his people, have been socialized over the course of several generations into alienating their constitution from their ceremonies.

The Muslims of the world no longer respect Allah's authority as the law of their lands. They no longer have a public mind that is

intent on struggling for its Islamic power base, its Islamic self-rule, its Islamic Madinah. Those who call pagans *mushriks* but cannot extend that designation to their false *ṭāghūtī* rulers, and those who are super-sensitive to idols of stone but become mentally challenged when it comes to idols of flesh do not understand this Qur’an, and are not familiar with the nature of this *dīn*. They have to be re-taught the Qur’an’s meanings so that they can live up to its standards and responsibilities, **“And if you obey them you are for sure *mushriks*” (6:121).**

Many Muslims bemuse themselves and others by assuming they are living an Islamic life in an Islamic system and an Islamic *dīn*. For them, everything is just fine, and all that needs to be done is to import some technology so that they too can join the fast lane into the *ākhirah*. This kind of attitude, which will not affect the *dīn* in any way whatsoever, is what has damaged and set back the leading position of Muslims in the world.

The large and expansive pool of efforts involving millions and millions of Muslims who spend their time dwelling on Islamic religious ceremonial functions, being punctiliously zealous about them, are doing more harm to the overall condition of Muslims than they could imagine. With their version of Islam that devotes no attention to power and authority — the very essence of divinity — and with their relapse into an interpretation of Islam as a formality they are stabbing the committed Muslims in the back. Instead of people being attracted to an Islam that has answers pertaining to the source of power and authority in man’s life, some of these long-bearded and short-trousered Muslim fanatics take these people away on a tangent of solemnity and stiltedness. The people’s potential for linking up with Allah (ﷻ) in a healthy manner turns into a fixation and a mania with the details of *wuḍū’*, *ṣalāh*, and other concerns of personal etiquette. Instead of it being a light out of the darkness of ignorance, oppression, and chaotic social relations, ritual-laden Islam becomes yet another agent of the same afflictions. Instead of an Islam focused on power and authority as contributors to justice via the scriptural Qur’anic way, the Islam of runaway ceremonialism, because of these strung-out pedantic individuals and their financial

connections (in some instances), becomes part of the status quo. In other words, anglicized secular “Islam” is part of the problem whereas the Islam of the Prophet (ﷺ) is not part of the solution.

These Muslim types who are marked by a narrow focus on and a narrow display of Islam think that Islam as a *dīn* already exists; the only thing it needs is some straightening up here and there, and then everything will be all right. In reality, if they just take their heads out of the sand and smell the air they are living in, Islam as a *dīn* does not exist. It does not exist because it has no authority and no power. The “world of Islam” is a world devoid of the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and a power base that stands for His authority.

Once Allah’s authority is firmly laid down and set up on earth, then the Muslims will have their *dīn*. In the absence of Allah’s moral authority, His civil authority, and His legal authority, the Muslims have no *dīn*. This *dīn* is having a hard time making a comeback because the overwhelming majority of governments, establishments, and administrations in the world, on the secular Euro-American model, are power-crazed and cannot tolerate any vestige of Allah’s total authority anywhere on earth. These frenzied regimes and organizations usurped the element of “authority” in life and claimed it for themselves. It is these bureaucracies and parliaments that gave themselves the license to enact laws, to concoct political orientations, and to formulate social theories pertaining to life, possessions, wealth, and populations. This is the malady the Qur’an came to cure, centuries ago as well as now. This matter of authority and power has always been central to divinity and humanity. It is the all-important denominator of *kufr* and *īmān*. It is what tips the balance either to stability, harmony, and justice or to instability, discord, and injustice.

The Islamic struggle is not a struggle with atheism, as some vested interests would like to portray it. Islamic “religiosity” can easily take on atheism. Islam is not in the first instance a conflict with moral decay or social corruption; these all are sub-conflicts to the original one, which is the struggle to make Islam the *dīn* of choice for all humanity. The first issue committed Muslims encounter in their energetic attempt against concentrated and abusive

power is to determine and settle the issue of authority and power: to whom does authority and power belong? This was the central issue in Makkah when the early Muslims were in a public debate and open clash with the power and authority structure of aristocratic Makkah. Through this contentious and strenuous effort the committed Muslims ascended to their ideological incompatibility with the status-quo, secular world around them. Those principled Muslims were less concerned with the non-scriptural constitution and laws than with the mental and ideological framework of such constitution and laws. The more the struggle continued the more reality sank into the consciousness of these committed Muslims: authority is Allah's and a public acknowledgment of this fact honors Him and honors man. When the Muslims in Makkah were finally of one mind and one heart on this matter, the venue of Madinah became open to them, putting them in a position to move forward with their God-given responsibilities of deconstructing the infrastructure of *kufr* and building an Islamic life under the authority of Allah (ﷻ).

Poverty Is No Justification for Infanticide

And out of whatever He has sprouted of the fruits of the field and [spawned of] cattle, they assign unto Allah a portion, saying, "This belongs to Allah" — or so they [falsely] claim — "and this is for those beings who, we are convinced, have a share in Allah's divinity." But that which is assigned to the beings associated in their minds with Allah does not reach Allah, whereas that which is assigned to Allah reaches those beings to whom they ascribe a share in His divinity. Bad, indeed, is their judgement! (6:136).

This *āyah* describes concepts in the non-scriptural society of Makkah and Arabia when the Qur'an was being revealed. It begins by stating the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is the one who effusively

brought forth produce and fruits, and caused cattle and livestock to reproduce. Wherever life has been allowed to take root, no one can germinate agriculture and multiply livestock animals except Allah, and He does so openhandedly so that everyone has equal access to His abundance. However, as to what ignorant humans do with their source of nourishment (which ultimately came to them from Allah), they allocate a certain amount of it to their idols and gods, that is, a religious class of people would consume it, while setting aside a different amount for Allah. And they would generally skimp on the latter.

Jāhili Arabians, when carrying food to their gods, would bring it in bundles that would be apportioned into shares, some of which were for Allah (ﷻ) and other shares for their gods. If the winds would blow from their gods' side to Allah's side, they would give back to their gods part of what was allocated to Allah. But if the winds blew from Allah's side to their gods' side they would certify that their gods are due what used to belong to Allah!⁶⁴⁸ Though this was a silly and foolish practice, it acquired an air of acceptability as a custom and integral part of a culture.

This did not signal the end of their imbecilic and puerile behavior, for they would also define a portion of a flock saying it belongs to Allah (ﷻ), while assigning another portion to their lesser gods. So if constituents would be conveyed from Allah's portion to their handmade gods, they would feel good, but when some constituents would go over from their gods' portion of the flock, they would return them to their original position.⁶⁴⁹

The Qur'an straightforwardly, in plainspoken language, repudiates the absurd beliefs of the *mushriks*. In full color, as it were, Allah comments on the ridiculous regulations of the pre-Islamic Arabians, **"And out of whatever He has germinated of the green goods and animals of the field,"** these unversed Arabians allotted a portion of farming and husbandry to Allah (ﷻ) and another portion to their gods, declaring **"This [portion] belongs to Allah [as a matter of gaining His nearness], and this [portion of fruits and animals] belongs to our other divines [also to gain proximity to the lesser ones]."** These other divines were the idols that

received a percentage of the *mushriks*’ money and wealth, and to whom they imputed power and authority — none of which was the right thing to do. And after all this, as if they were the reference point to the way people ought to be behaving, these Arabians claimed their actions were validated on instructions from Allah.

In some of their social norms they would take the share of agriculture and cattle they allocated to Allah (ﷻ) and give it to guests, the very young, and to those in need, as a matter of charity. However, the share they assigned to their idols would strictly service their religious hierarchy and its interests. Whatever they saw fit for their gods would never be channeled to Allah, that is, to the poor, the infirm, and the guests; rather it would be channeled to ecclesiastical functionaries who maintained their idols and what may have been rudimentary temples, and to religious ritual sacrifices. They also had other reasons to cut into the share they apportioned to Allah, for they would often dedicate it to their idols.

“Bad, indeed, is their judgement.” How misguided a person’s judgement becomes when he prioritizes people and things over Allah (ﷻ). According to their own standards, the Arabian *mushriks* gave preference to their manufactured gods, relegating Allah to an inferior consideration. Other *āyāt* in the Qur’an shed further light on people who demean Allah and admire their own selves,

And [thus, too], they ascribe daughters unto Allah, who is limitless in His glory — whereas for themselves [they would choose, if they could, only] what they desire (16:57);

And yet, they attribute to Him offspring from among some of the beings created by Him! Verily, most obviously bereft of all gratitude is man! (43:15);

Why — for yourselves [you would choose only] male offspring, whereas to Him [you assign] female: that, lo and behold, is an unfair division (53:21–22).

This is more proof, if more is needed, of how man makes the law his own prerogative, excluding Allah (ﷻ) as a matter of culture, indoctrination, or philosophy. In the process anyone having power or authority becomes the unspoken god or the enshrined idol. That their people accept such an illogical practice, which has no scriptural basis, as the “natural order” of things is what human would-be gods count on.

The social practice of marking out certain cattle for the idols is a form of superstition, even if the people participating in it make it seem like a spiritual act of access to God. Correspondingly, these Arabian blunderers, in fixing their own ways to please God, led themselves to believe, inconceivably, that killing your own child could be an act of religiosity,

And, likewise, their belief in beings or powers that are supposed to have a share in God's divinity makes [even] the slaying of their children seem appreciable to many of those who ascribe divinity to any beside Him, thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith. Yet, unless Allah had so willed, they would not be doing all this: stand, therefore, aloof from them and all their false imagery! (6:137).

The inclination to do such a thing does not come from stones; it comes from human beings who are in positions of influence and authority, religious or administrative. Cultures and political constitutions may devise an argument for killing one's own child(ren); today this can be seen in some arguments that seek to rationalize abortion because of poverty.⁶⁵⁰ Trying to justify the murder of infants in the womb for advanced societies, or after birth for primitive societies, is a satanic act. The underlying attempt at rationalization is Satan's insinuation of a creeping poverty that will strike the family if the yet-to-be-born or newborn were to live on, or of an endemic poverty that could only be exacerbated with one more mouth to feed. Satan tries to ensnare man in illusory fears; but it is Allah (ﷻ) who has the final word on the issue,

...and do not kill your children for fear of poverty — [for] it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them... (6:151);

Hence, do not kill your children for fear of poverty: it is We who shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily, killing them is a great sin (17:31).

Some atrocious and sinister claims call for the murder of young girls lest they disgrace the family, cause financial stress, or become married to men of limited means (unqualified mates). Such gender discrimination in the matter of murder disguised as population or birth control is not a thing of the past; it is alive and well today. Consider below the practice of sex-selective abortions, a term that could only have applicability in the “modern” world, which generally take aim at killing unborn females,

Despite advances in civil rights and the recognition by most developed nations that discrimination on the basis of sex alone is inherently unjust, a very real and pervasive form of sex discrimination is still permitted and practiced in the world today. Prenatal sex discrimination crosses cultural, ethnic, and national lines. It is practiced with impunity in many countries, including the US, via sex-selective abortion — choosing to abort a preborn child based solely on the child’s sex. Prenatal discrimination can also be practiced pre-implantation by destroying embryos based on a pre-implantation sex determination. Undoubtedly, such practices constitute discrimination against a unique human individual based on sex alone, and thus constitute sex discrimination. In order to address this injustice, it is imperative that states and the federal government institute selection abortion bans — restrictions on abortions done for reasons of sex selection alone.

Sex-selective abortion is a well-known problem in China and India, where a cultural preference for sons,

coupled with political and economic influences, has severely skewed sex ratios at birth (SRBs). Instances of sex discrimination perpetrated via abortion and infanticide are well documented and have resulted in millions of “missing” girls in some societies. In China, for example, men outnumber women to the tune of 33 million. More than 20 years ago, Amartya Sen (1990) documented that 100 million girls and women were “missing” from the global population as a consequence of neglect, infanticide, and inequalities in care. The figure is now estimated to be in excess of 160 million, with sex-selective abortion playing a major role... Such practices constitute a real “war on women” and have been widely condemned. Those who claim to be concerned with women’s rights can no longer ignore the need to ban sex-selective abortion in order to protect girls from “gendercide.”⁶⁵¹

Regardless of how Satan camouflages the murder of young girls and female babies with the rhetoric of freedom, equality, and liberality, man would go back to prehistoric times in a heartbeat were it not for Allah’s guidance in the Qur’an. His rebuking answer to this shameful and criminal attitude came over 14 centuries ago, **“...and when the girl-child that was buried alive is made to ask for what crime she had been slain” (81:8–9)**. In various cultures, past and present, public impression applauds the killing of children as a ritual custom or religious ceremony. This was the norm in Arabia prior to Islam. The Prophet’s grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, vowed to kill his son ‘Abdullāh in a divination ritual before the Prophet (ﷺ) was born. Whenever the Prophet would be reminded of this incident, he would say, *“I am the son of the two [who were to be] butchered.”*⁶⁵²

Allah (ﷻ) advises the committed Muslims about what will happen to those who engage in these ungodly practices, **“...thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith.”** It is the subtle influence of Satan in the human psychology that brings people to the brink of such atrocities, including the killing of one’s own

children. Constituting a form of hemorrhage in society, this kind of savagery deforms man's divinely created state of nature, which was designed to be fulfilled in the attachment of family members, one to another, especially the older with the younger.

In this way the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl, or whatever was left of it in Arabia at the time of Muhammad (ﷺ), was being further polluted and fouled. However, none of this could have happened were it not for the will of Allah making room even for man's injustice to man. This is not to say that Allah (ﷻ) condones such wicked human behavior; but the fact that it exists is indicative of a larger divine plan wherein those powerful and influential people who service the repression of depraved culture, the bias of godless philosophy, and the cruelty of profane religion are exposed as they kill their own babies instead of loving and protecting them. Obviously, none of these dysfunctional human behaviors has a basis in scripture, nor are they authorized by Allah.

During the Makkan struggle, the Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) could not make significant headway against such iniquity and inhumanity because they had no authority or power. The moral standard they held so dear, which outlaws such savage behavior, can only be effectively managed when an Islamic society has power and authority. And this is what concerned and preoccupied the committed Muslims who were being trained by the Prophet (ﷺ) to yield to Allah's ultimate power and authority, so that when they would have temporal power at some point in the future, they would use it as a means, rather than an end, to discharge their social responsibilities to the Most High.

And they say, “Such and such cattle and fruits of the field are sacred; none may eat thereof save those whom we determine [should do so]” — so they [falsely] claim; and [they declare that] it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain kinds of cattle; and there are cattle over which they do not pronounce Allah's name — falsely attributing [the origin of these customs] to Him. [But] He will requite them for all their false imagery.

And they say, “All that is in the wombs of such and such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our women; but if it be stillborn, then both may have their share thereof.” [Allah] will requite them for all that they [falsely] attribute [to Him]: behold, He is wise, all-knowing (6:138–139).

In the scripturally uninformed world, as was the case in Arabia at that time, the warped *jāhiliyah* divided agriculture and livestock into three categories:

1. Cattle and food that no one could consume as these were dedicated to the gods and idols. The priestly class among them insisted that these sources of nutrition were sequestered, meaning that these potential foodstuffs were pledged to the gods and no one else. They disallowed anyone from eating of these items except those certified to do so, generally members of the religious class. Sometimes men would be allowed these restricted articles in exclusion of women.
2. Some farm animals were not to be ridden or mounted; no one would be permitted to ride such animals or load them with cargo or consignment.⁶⁵³
3. Selected cattle upon which invoking Allah’s name at the time of slaughter was forbidden. Instead, they would invoke the names of their idols. The same cattle could not be mounted, burdened, or consumed for the purposes of the Hajj.

Attributing this whole classification to Allah (ﷻ) was an out-and-out fabrication. He never legalized such practices. They may have claimed that their edicts were a result of Allah’s command so as to legitimize their occurrence. But Allah has already absolved Himself from their itinerant lawmaking,

Say, “Have you ever considered all the means of sustenance Allah has bestowed upon you from on high — which you thereupon divide into ‘things forbidden’ and ‘things lawful?’” Say, “Has Allah given you leave

[to do this], or do you, perchance, attribute your own guesswork to Allah?” (10:59).

Similarly, in more of their unsubstantiated norms and practices, **“All that is in the wombs of such and such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our females...”** Allah (ﷻ) disentangles revelation from human intrusion. The dairy and yield from these reserved farm animals, the *baḥīrah* and the *sā’ibah*, were set aside exclusively for the consumption of the men in that culture and society. If the newborn from any of these animals turned out to be a male, its meat was only to be eaten by men and not women; if a female, then it was left to live and give birth, never to be butchered; and lastly, if the newborn animal was stillborn, its flesh could be shared by both men and women. For all their extemporization and fabrication of social laws and customary practices, the authority and power elites of society will find that the rope of divine justice will eventually catch up with them,

Hence, do not utter falsehoods by letting your tongues determine [at your own discretion], “This is lawful and that is forbidden,” thus attributing your own lying inventions to Allah: for, behold, they who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah will never be effective (16:116).

Allah (ﷻ) proceeds to renounce and reject the act of killing babies and reversing His will to make the lawful unlawful,

Lost, indeed, are those who, in their weak-minded ignorance, kill their children and declare as forbidden that which Allah has provided for them as sustenance, falsely ascribing [such prohibitions] to Allah: they have gone astray and have not found the right path (6:140).

These are strong words. The readers of the Qur’an will realize that all cultural practices and philosophical arguments seeking to justify

the murder of life in the womb or life immediately after the womb cannot face down the emphatic and conclusive divine position on the matter.

Those who kill life in the womb or babies and infants do so with a brutal disposition, a downright contempt for human life. They are, for all intents and purposes, literally crazy. Among them are those who fear an imagined or fictitious poverty. Would-be baby-killers have deadened the conscience that could withhold their hand from committing this heinous crime. Something is seriously amiss with the individual who kills his or her baby to evade an illusive poverty only to gain a certain shame, guilt, and remorse that will have to be addressed on the Day of Judgement. Not to parse any words, murder justified by the fear of poverty is quite simply a cardinal sin.

But reality beckons. There is undeniable poverty and famine in the world. Having one more mouth to feed is a problem for those who are already starving. So, where is Allah's abundance on this earth and from this earth? Why is it not available to those who may fall into a state of need? The inability of principled people to break down the structure of erroneous authority and to obliterate the footing of iron-fisted power is what forces weak and vulnerable parents to consider the unthinkable possibility of getting rid of their children. This does not happen to individuals, though individuals are forced into making such choices, but to societies — societies in which wealth only circulates at the top, in which it was not really meant to trickle down because their policies make it so. Any society reaching this low is doomed by its own ignorance, indifference, and inability to express compassion through spending and distributing what a few in the human race have monopolized for themselves — what in the divine order of things was meant to be an endowment for humanity by Allah (ﷻ). Such are people who are so entrenched with their egos in their own cultures that they are unable to step out and breathe some fresh air, who have become so arrogant and inflexible that they feel there are no answers except what they themselves produce, **“...they have gone wayward, and are unable to find the straight path.”** Some words from Ibn ‘Abbās echo this meaning,

If it pleases you to learn about the ignorance of Arabians then read what follows the 130th āyah from Sūrah al-An‘ām, **“Lost, indeed, are they who, in their foolish ignorance, kill their children... and have not found the right path.”**⁶⁵⁴

These āyāt illustrate how cruel, cold-blooded, and pitiless the pre-Islamic Arabians were. Nonetheless, when Islam came, this all began to recede and disappear. The Prophet was the pivotal figure in this miraculous transformation. Ibn Zayd said, “When the Arabs slaughtered animals for Allah, they would invoke the names of idols, and when they slaughtered for their idols they would not invoke Allah’s name.”⁶⁵⁵ They were never fair in their allocations. Whatever they would want to dedicate to Allah (ﷻ), and by extension the poor and the indigent, they would give to their idols, and whatever they dedicated to their idols would be consumed by their aristocrats and religious higher-ups. Arabian society before Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an was guilty of infanticide. The fear of poverty, which is attributable more to the monopoly of resources and food by man than to the absence or scarcity of sustenance, led many fathers to kill their own daughters, often by burying them alive. A contributing factor in the execution of such a decision was the male perception of women as a fighting liability during war, or as one incapable of defending herself (or her honor). Not one of these social malpractices were endorsed by the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl (ﷺ), which they claimed they were following.

In this entire lineup of violations, the worst offences were their murder of children, especially the girls, and their turning Allah’s *ḥalāl* into *ḥarām* or vice versa. This has been mentioned more than once in āyāt throughout the Qur’an. According to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the Qur’anic judgement against them was based on seven of their adverse characteristics,

1. their loss – a child is a magnanimous grace from Allah (ﷻ) upon His subject;
2. idiocy or light-mindedness – such is the killing of a child because of an anticipated poverty, which, no doubt, is a social

- vice, but worse and more criminal is the act of killing; poverty is surreal but murder is real;
3. ignorance and the lack of education – these *jāhili* practices sprung from ignorance, which is at the root of many vices and vicious acts;
 4. making unlawful what Allah (ﷻ) had made lawful – an act of grand jeopardy as man denies himself the abundance that makes life healthy and wholesome;
 5. fabrications attributed to Allah – a very serious violation and offense against Allah;
 6. deviation – from the interests of the *dīn* and the improvement of worldly life; and
 7. obliviousness – in such a condition no people or society can find the right and balanced course; they are doomed to be misguided and misled, ultimately having to face the impending fate of self-annihilation.⁶⁵⁶

It has been narrated that a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) was always unhopeful and sad in the presence of the latter. One day, the Prophet asked the man, “*Why are you so sad?*” He replied, “O Messenger of Allah! I committed a sin in my pre-Islamic days, and I am afraid Allah will never forgive me for it, even though I became a Muslim.” So, the Prophet inquired, “*Tell me about your sin.*” The man responded,

O Messenger of Allah! I was one of those who killed their daughters. A daughter was born to me. My wife beseeched me to leave her alive. I left her alone until she grew up and reached the age of maturity. She became one of the most beautiful women. [Marriage] proposals came her way. Then I felt a type of manic-ardor; my heart could not bear seeing her get married or to see her at home without a husband.

I said to my wife, “I want to go to a particular tribe to visit my relatives, so send her [my daughter] with me.” She [my wife] was so happy that she adorned and beauti-

fied her with clothes and jewels. Then my wife made me swear that I would not betray her trust in me. I set out with my daughter until I reached a well [of water].

I looked into the well; at that time the young girl [my daughter] realized that I wanted to throw her into the well. She held on to me and while she was crying she said, “What do you want to do with me?” I felt sorry for her. Then I looked at the well again and that feeling of manic-ardor gripped me, and then she held me again and began saying, “Father, do not betray my mother’s trust in you.” Then I looked at the well again, and then at her, and I felt sorry for her, until Satan overcame me; so I held her and threw her head down into the well. She cried out from the well, “Father! You killed me.” I stayed there until she spoke no more.

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) wept and so did his companions. Then he said, “*If I were to order a punishment for acts committed during the jāhiliyyah, I would have had you punished.*”⁶⁵⁷

God Created and Therefore He Regulates

For it is He who has brought into being gardens — [both] the cultivated ones and those growing wild — and the date-palm, and fields bearing multiform produce, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate: [all] resembling one another and yet so different! Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition, and give [to the poor] their due on harvest day. And do not waste [Allah’s bounties]: verily, He does not love the wasteful!

And of the cattle reared for work and for the sake of their meat, eat whatever Allah has provided for you as sustenance, and follow not Satan’s footsteps: behold, he is your open enemy! [His followers would have it that, in certain cases, any of these] four kinds of cattle

of either sex [is unlawful to man]: either of the two sexes of sheep and of goats. Ask [them], “Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me what you know in this respect, if what you say is true.”

And [likewise they declare as unlawful] either of the two sexes of camels and of bovine cattle. Ask [them], “Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Is it, perchance, that you [yourselves] were witnesses when Allah enjoined [all] this upon you?” And who could be more wicked than he who, without any [real] knowledge, attributes his own lying inventions to Allah, and thus leads people astray? Behold, Allah does not grace [such] iniquitous folk with His guidance (6:141–144).

Allah (ﷻ) breaks through the “taken for granted” attitudes of men, and brings them back to basics. The pivotal fact here is that it is Allah who created food, nutrients, and agrarian produce, as well as domesticated animals, whose flesh, by and large, is considered lawful to eat. These are the same categories of nutrition that sub-scriptural cultures and political orientations have poisoned with man-made regulations and ungodly practices. Arbitrarily, although claiming it originated from God (in today’s secular, materialistic world, even that notion is dismissed), these people in power and authority either prohibit or allow what they want, making up their own rules of what is *ḥalāl* and what is *ḥarām* as they go. To put this whole affair back in its original and proper context, Allah says, **“And it is He who has sprung forth gardens...”**

Unthinking and ungrateful man needs to pause for a moment of reflection and then affirm that it is Allah (ﷻ) who planned and proliferated groves and gardens, be they domestic or wild. He also created the date-palm trees, reaching a height of 30 m (100 ft); a single tree produces up to 250 kg (550 lb) of deep orange, sugary

dates each year for up to 100 years or more. He created for man rolling fields of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as grains, all designed to nourish him as he sets out to fulfill his divine purpose. He brought into existence the olive tree, a long-lived evergreen tree native to the Mediterranean region, growing to 15 m (50 ft). The wild form (variety *sylvestris*), a noticeably smaller tree, is bushy with spiny branches and small fruits; the cultivated olive (variety *europaea*) is said to have been grown since early times as an important source of olive oil obtained from pressed fruit. The fruits can also be pickled, both green and ripe. The trees also yield timber.⁶⁵⁸

Allah (ﷻ) created the pomegranate. This is a deciduous, sometimes spiny, shrub or tree growing to 9 m (30 ft), native to southwest Asia, and cultivated in Europe since ancient times. Its fruit are 5–8 cm (2–3.5 in), ball-shaped, and with yellow or reddish, leathery skin; the seeds inside are numerous, each embedded in translucent, purplish, juicy, and sweet flesh.⁶⁵⁹

“Similar but different...” Many olives look the same but they can be of different varieties. This is also applicable to dates, pomegranates, and other fruits and vegetables. All these are seasonal produce to correspond with man’s needs and optimum nutrition. Despite their variations, the entire assortment is fed with one water and from one soil. And as a measure of the abundance Allah (ﷻ) infused in his bounty, all are of open access to man, **“Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition.”**

Man has a right to Allah’s profusion; however there can be no disciplined exercise of rights unless they are attended by responsibility, hence, **“And give [to the poor] their due on harvest day.”** On the day the produce is reaped or harvested, an immediate proportion of it is due to those in need. The amount to be distributed is determined by the nature of irrigation: if the produce has been (naturally) irrigated by rainfall, then one-tenth of it is to be distributed among the poor; if, on the other hand, the produce has been irrigated by a river, artesian well, or other means of artificial (man-involved) irrigation, then one-twentieth of it is due. Those who are in need are ranked, in order of importance, first to the next of kin, then orphans, and then those who are in more need than others. This

outline comes from those who define the harvest distribution as *zakāh*. Other scholars differ, saying that since this is a Makkan *āyah* revealed before the advent of technical *zakāh*, giving on harvest day should be liberal, generous, and openhanded. A few scholars are of the opinion that this particular *āyah* was revealed in Madinah.⁶⁶⁰

As if on cue, the end of the *āyah* refines how that responsibility is to be discharged, **“And do not waste [Allah’s provisions].”** This means that food should serve the purpose of defeating hunger; harvest time is not an occasion for self-indulgence or wild revelry. Another *āyah* complements this meaning, **“...and eat and drink [freely], but do not waste: verily, He does not love the wasteful!” (7:31).** Furthermore, wastefulness in giving is also proscribed,

And neither allow your hand to remain shackled to your neck [withholding what is due to the poor], nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit [of your capacity], lest you find yourself blamed [by your dependents], or even destitute (17:29).

Waste here means overdoing it, going to the extreme, unmindful of the consequences. Thus, wastefulness, improvidence, and thriftlessness are unwanted and undesirable features in almost everything, whether it is eating, spending, or any number of things man does.

Of Allah’s plentiful bounties to man is the creation of any of a variety of hoofed, cud-chewing mammals, such as cattle, sheep, and deer. Many of these animals are domesticated, ruminant bovines raised for their meat or milk. There are also domestic animals kept for work, byproducts, or sale, especially cattle, sheep, camels, and horses. Some of these animals are raised on farms for profit. Farming and crops, ranching and animal husbandry are activities of man contingent upon Allah’s generosity and bounty. *Āyāt* bolstering this general meaning include,

Are they, then, not aware that it is for them We have created, among all the things Our hands have wrought, the domestic animals of which they are [now] masters?

— and that We have subjected them [the animals] to men’s will, so that some of them they may use for riding and of some they may eat? (36:71–72);

And, behold, in the cattle [too] there is indeed a lesson for you: We give you to drink of the [fluid] that is [secreted from] within their bellies between that which is to be eliminated [from the animal’s body] and [its] life-blood: milk pure and pleasant to those who drink it (16:66).

These words come to man courtesy of the best source and the finest reference on this matter. Allah (ﷻ) is the one advising man that he can eat from the meat of cattle in the same way he can eat from the produce of soil, “Eat whatever Allah has provided for you as sustenance.”

This is an appropriate place to respond to those vegetarians who, from a “moral” point of view, seek to interdict the human consumption of all animal flesh, not just that which is slaughtered at the altar of commercialism and profit (this is not the position of all vegetarians and hence what is said below is not to be generalized). It is one thing to restrict the consumption of meat, even to severely restrict it; but to make something *ḥarām* that Allah (ﷻ) made *ḥalāl* is beyond the pale. To suggest that a method of slaughter approved by Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) is cruel and inhumane moves the determination of what is moral and what is not, what is compassionate and what is not into the domain of man. Let it be clear: morals come from Allah — and only Him. Man has not been given the license to trespass into this area.

Vegetarianism is the practice of eating a diet devoid of meat. People who follow a diet containing dairy products and eggs are known as *ovo-facto-vegetarians*. Those who shun all animal foods, even animal ingredients in packaged foods, are known as *vegans*. People become vegetarians for a variety of “ethical,” ecological, health, and religious reasons. The vegetarian diet may be healthier than the omnivorous one (a diet inclusive of both the flesh of ani-

mals and plant mass), since it is likely to contain less fat, more fiber, and more antioxidant micronutrients. There are few nutritional disadvantages to vegetarianism, the only possible problem being low levels and low availability of iron in vegetable foods. Veganism, may, however pose problems, with low dietary intakes of available calcium, iron, and zinc, and little or no dietary intake of vitamin B12, which is not found in higher plants. Vegans overcome the latter problem by taking B12 supplements, or by eating fermented foods where the bacteria provide the B12.

Responsible people in the world today are having more than their share of problems in trying to feed the whole planet adequately. Given this situation and the fact that Allah (ﷻ) did not proscribe the consumption of animal flesh, there is no need for a *tahrim* (prohibition) by some well-intentioned individuals who suggest that eating meat is wrong or *ḥarām* because it is cruel to animals. When human opinions, not certainties, are presented under the cover of noble causes, Allah provides the reference points to guide man away from the consequences of his “meaning to do good” persuasions. Otherwise, those who give in to what obviously contradicts the certain information in the Qur’an follow in the footsteps of Satan as did the Arabian *mushriks* in ancient times when they would put off eating certain fruits, vegetables, or meats. Once again, minimizing the human consumption of meat may be permissible, even advisable, but saying that it is *ḥarām* is not. Allah is the reference of record here — without any prevarication.

In this matter, as in other matters, it is Satan who entices man to part with Allah’s authority. Satan thus is an affirmed enemy who has nothing to contribute to man’s well-being,

But he [Satan] commands you to do what is wrong and morally offensive, and to attribute to Allah what you do not know (2:169);

And follow not Satan’s footsteps: behold, he is your open adversary (6:142);

Behold, Satan is a foe upon you: so treat him as a foe. He but calls on his followers to the end that they might find themselves among such as are destined for the blazing flame (35:6).

Cattle or livestock can be categorized as either *ḥamūlah*, large-sized animals suitable for and capable of carrying loads and doing labor; or *farsh*, smaller animals incapable of and not suitable for loads and labor. *Ḥamūlah* refers to either camels or oxen (cows), whereas, *farsh* to either sheep or goats. Each classification of these four comes as either male or female,

1. sheep – ram (male) or ewe (female);
2. goat – buck (he-goat) or doe (she-goat);
3. camel – he-camel or she-camel; and
4. bovine – ox (bull or steer) or cow (female).

In these *āyāt*, the Prophet (ﷺ) is commanded to ask the people who laid down laws and rules, those who sanctified certain of these animals, which male’s meat is prohibited, the ram or the buck (he-goat)? Or is it the she-camel and the doe (she-goat)? Or is it the female fetus of these two kinds? These people are put on the spot about how they reached the conclusion that Allah (ﷻ) prohibited these animals from being eaten or from labor and sale; about whether there is any evidence of their strictures in any scripture; or about evidence from some prophet advising them to do what they were forcing upon the rest of society. In the end, they had no proof whatsoever of their folly and foolishness concerning these dietary “rules.” Allah never prohibited what they were busy outlawing. And if they narcissistically made that claim, they were out-and-out liars. There can be nothing more offensive and hideous than those elites who attribute to Allah what He neither said, nor ordered,

Is it, perchance, that you [yourselves] were witnesses when Allah issued an injunction to you about [all] this?” And who could be more wicked than he who, without any [real] knowledge, attributes his own lying

inventions to Allah, and thus leads people astray? Behold, Allah does not grace [such] iniquitous folk with His guidance (6:144).

What the *āyah* is describing may not have happened in one fell swoop (all at once). The passing of centuries and generations went into the fossilization of the *dīn* of Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl (ﷺ) into the culture of *jāhiliyah*.

He who thinks that the matter of *ḥalāl* animals and *ḥarām* produce is silly should think again. Today, there is a parallel *jāhiliyah* in which the elites have their own foolish regulations and laws that people obey as if they were the final word on the subject. Take, for example, the “modern” world’s obsession with fashion and designer apparel. Individuals and people attend to clothing in general, ornaments and accessories, the look and feel, and the designer label with a conviction bordering on the religious. In this mindset there are accouterments (personal clothing and effects); beachwear (bathing suits and garments designed for the beach or pool parties); ensembles (a complete outfit, especially when well-coordinated); evening wear (a complete outfit of formal clothing); and trending wear (specific and especially the current style of clothing). And who makes such fashion current or obsolete, if not the same interlocking corporate, media, and financial interests? They are the ones in control of banks and legal establishments, as well as governments and militaries. They also run an assortment of other indoctrinating or brainwashing operations besides the fashion industry and its derivatives in this world of the fatuous and foolish.

Some Muslims, as devoted as they want to be, take on this fashion madness by targeting its (Muslim) victims. They start bickering with fashion consumers in the neighborhood or in their circles of acquaintance, trying to convince them that wearing something “cool” or “chic” is a form of *bid‘ah* or even *shirk*. When the swords are crossed, so to speak, and the discussion heats up, these Muslim “*dā‘īs*” feel a sense of fulfillment after doing their *wājib* (duty). But why is it so hard for these sincere Muslims to raise their maturity and awareness level a little bit so that the larger pic-

ture comes into clear view? Why do they have a “deer in the headlights” moment when it comes to exposing the gods and lords who are running this fashion religion, among others? Why can they not convince people that the criminals behind the scenes are the ones who are responsible for all this nonsense because they have authority and power?

The worst part of all this is that the gods and idols in the world of God-usurped authority are “religious.” Those “Jews” and “Christians” who usurp power and monopolize authority attend services at synagogues and churches. But are there any rabbis or priests, neither paid-off nor scared, who dare expose them for what they are — the highest order of criminals possible? What adds insult to injury is that we, the Muslims, have a ruling class and its sub-religious functionaries who also behave like poodles. They, too, wrap themselves in religious ceremonies such as the attendance of 'Īd prayers (for the cameras), and attending the Hajj and 'Umrah (making sure they are photographed coming and going).

Chemically Toxicified Meat Falls under the Category of Carrion

When men of reason read the Qur'an they transition from a poor ability to understand or profit from experience to a new plateau of thinking that is coherent and logical. Repositioning man's mind away from the outside layers of a material world in matters of agriculture and livestock, the Qur'an fixes his attention on the origins of harvests and staples, herds and livestock. Man left to his material bindings has a penchant for doing whatever he wants with vegetation and cattle. Sometimes this human attitude turns into social policies that enforce instructions from demigods or supermen, who in turn are more attuned to the world of Satan than to the world of God. These demigods, try as they might to exhibit the “authority” attribute of Allah (ﷻ), never had, nor will ever have any involvement in the creation of food for people. All they can do is to try to smother the fact that Allah is the Creator of foodstuffs (from the plant or animal kingdoms) with their philosophies and religions guilty of *shirk*. If Allah is the one who created, then He alone is the

authority pertaining to what He created and provided. Similarly, Allah's dominion extends over the affluence and fortunes man is temporarily in possession of.

When a thinking man acquiesces to this fact then he is ready to listen to what Allah (ﷻ) has to say about unlawful plant life as well as unlawful beasts. And when Allah speaks He "knows what He is talking about" — He neither speculates nor guesses. The enduring truth is that Allah is the source-sovereignty and the competent authority before and after "official gods" and "godly officials" confound the issue. Whenever Allah says something is *ḥalāl* (proper and legal), it is so; and whenever He says something is *ḥarām* (improper and illegal), it is so — without question. Human modification or embellishment will only serve to muddle what was clear to begin with. Allah's authority is authentic, cogent, and fair. In stating this fact, the Qur'an mentions what was at one time unlawful to the Jews in particular, but then rendered lawful to the Muslims. The Jews incurred such legal restrictions because of their offensive peculiarities with regard to God,

Say [O Prophet], "In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine — for that, behold, is loathsome — or a sinful offering over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked. But if one is driven by necessity — neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need — then [know that], behold, your Sustainer is much-forgiving, a mercy-giver.

And [only] unto those who followed the Jewish faith did We forbid all beasts that have claws; and We forbade them the fat of both oxen and sheep, excepting that which is in their backs or entrails or that which is within the bone: thus did We requite them for their inequity — for, behold, We are true to Our word!" And if they give you the lie, say, "Limitless is your Sustainer in His grace; but His punishment shall not

be averted from people who are lost in malfeasance”
(6:145–147).⁶⁶¹

The divine words here rebuke those who presumptuously take authority into their own hands, that is, the *mushriks* who would make legal or illegal whatever they think suitable. When his Lord and Creator has determined what is *ḥalāl* and what is *ḥarām*, then man is in no position to authorize or forbid potential food items, except within his limited sphere of activities on earth where he is constrained to observe Allah’s strictures. In this overview of the subject matter pertaining to animal flesh, the prohibited categories are the four that were cited in earlier *āyāt*: dead flesh, blood, the offensive meat of swine, and *fiṣq* — degenerate meat butchered in a process in which the consciousness of Allah (ﷻ) has been vacated by the commercial powers that be.

The straight course in this Makkan *sūrah* indicates that four types of animal mass are off limits to Muslims, and to others who honor God. *Āyāt* from *Sūrah*s *al-Baqarah* (a Madinan *sūrah*) and *al-Nahl*, respectively, echo the one above,

But He has banned you from [eating] dead meat, blood, pork, and whatever was butchered with the invocation [of anything] besides Allah... (2:173);

Instead, He has made unlawful to you [the consumption of] carrion, blood, swine meat, and whatever [meat] has been slaughtered with the invocation of other than Allah; as for he who is driven by necessity while neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need, [then he will find] Allah, indeed, to be forgiving, and merciful (16:115).

Similarly, from *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*,

Lawful to you is the [flesh of] beasts that feed on plants, save what is mentioned to you [hereinafter]... (5:1).

Unanimous Islamic scholarly judgement affirms that “**save what is mentioned to you [hereinafter]**” is clarified by a succeeding *āyah* from the same *sūrah*,

Forbidden to you is carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any name other than Allah’s has been invoked, and the animal that has been strangled, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, save that which you [yourselves] may have slaughtered while it was still alive; and [forbidden to you is] all that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars (5:3).

Strangled, beaten to death, killed by a fall, gored to death, or savaged by a beast are sub-classifications of dead animals or carrion.

The *mushriks* of today are advised that the above was revealed in response to their analogs playing around with laws here and there in history. From the past through to the present, there has been no irrefutable way to ascertain what meat is either edible or not except by what comes to man from Allah (ﷻ). This line of communication is known as revelation or scripture. And the only scripture man still has in its original text is the Qur’an, which was brought to man by Allah’s Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). And in the whole of this Qur’an, no other nutritional substances besides these four are *ḥarām*. So Allah tells His Messenger to inform people far and near that whatever dietary laws and regulations they may legislate for themselves they err when they do not affirm this God-revealed truth about a prescribed selection of food.

The first of these four classifications is carrion, that is, all animals that are killed or die without the ritual slaughter authorized by Allah (ﷻ). This includes animals that are strangled or gored, that fell to their death, that were beaten to death, or that were savaged by another beast. The meat of these dead animals is toxic and polluted because blood has “pooled into their organs”; in a sense, the meat is drenched with blood. Meat soaking in blood is poisonous, not to mention noxious and harmful. So anyone consuming

such animal flesh is eating meat in a secondary way but blood in a primary way.

Meat is the edible muscle of animals, the most common forms being beef, lamb, poultry, and game. It is rich in protein, iron, and zinc. The amount of fat in meat is determined by the age of the animal, the method of husbandry, and butchering method. In a world devoid of Allah's authority, there are people eating not only pork and bacon, but also many other species such as donkeys, dogs, cats, snakes, monkeys, alligators, and rodents.

Some may ask why the subject of meat is such a big deal. Given that a person is in charge of his "own" life, why should it not be his business and his choice to determine what he should eat and what he should avoid? Why would God be concerned about what he puts into his mouth and stomach? The short answer is that man's knowledge is imperfect and incomplete, hence he is likely to falter and hurt himself; so Allah (ﷻ) reduces the complexity by giving him a set of guidelines,

...it may well be that you hate a thing the while it is good for you, and it may well be that you love a thing the while it is bad for you: and Allah knows, whereas you do not know (2:216).

Such questions are symptomatic of human beings, creatures of desire that they are, who have an improper relationship with their Creator. No person, and at the very least, no scripturally inspired individual ought to allow his appetite to dictate what he can eat. Secondly, Allah does care about what His subjects consume: He does not want people eating things that will depreciate their health and erode their physical or psychological well-being. Because the Qur'an devotes a number of *āyāt* to the issue, meat cannot be regarded as something insignificant; hence the information below is provided to add some contextual weight to the subject.

Meat can play havoc with the health of a meat-consuming individual. In the first instance it can infest the human digestive tract with harmful and sometimes lethal pathogens or microorganisms.

Several types of parasitic worms can thrive in the human intestines, the most common being pinworms, tapeworms, hookworms, and roundworms. Worms irritate the intestinal lining and therefore cause poor absorption of nutrients. Signs of worms often include diarrhea, hunger pains, appetite loss, weight loss, and anemia. Diagnosis can be made by examining the stools or, occasionally, by inducing the vomiting of worms. The extent of intestinal damage is then determined by the type of worm, the size of the worm, and the number of worms present.⁶⁶²

Pinworms are the most common parasitic worm in the United States. The chief symptom of this small, threadlike worm is rectal itching, especially at night. Pinworms are transmitted when eggs, which lodge under fingernails when a person scratches, contaminate food. Personal hygiene is most important for the control of pinworms. Tapeworms can be contracted from eating insufficiently cooked meats, especially beef, pork, and fish. The most common tapeworm in the United States, beef tapeworm, grows to a length of 15–20 ft in the intestines. Hookworms are often found in the soil or sand in moderate climates. They can enter the body by boring holes in the skin of the bare feet or by mouth if food contaminated by dirty hands is eaten. Roundworms are most common in children. These worms can leave the intestines and settle in different areas of the body, causing diseases such as pneumonia, jaundice, or periodontitis.⁶⁶³

Animals that have been given diets deficient in protein, vitamin A, and some of the B complex vitamins have become infested with several types of parasites, including trichinae (from undercooked pork), and trichomoniasis, which grows in the lungs, intestines, or around the vagina. When the diet was improved, the parasites gradually died.⁶⁶⁴

A diet high in refined carbohydrates, supplying few nutrients, increases a person's susceptibility to infestation. When a person is afflicted with parasites, the body's supply of all nutrients is depleted to the point that supplementation of all nutrients is necessary to restore normal health. Nutrients of special importance are vitamin A; the B complex, especially thiamine, riboflavin, B6, B12, and

pantothenic acid; vitamins C, D, and K; and calcium, iron, and protein. Acidophilus is especially helpful for amoebic dysentery and possibly for all intestinal infestations. Sufficient stomach acid destroys parasites contained in food.⁶⁶⁵

With the commercialization of agriculture and the food supply in the present day, there are now problems with animal feed that have not been encountered before. The world's meat supply today is contaminated with chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, hormones, and antibiotics just to name a few. Since 1950, antibiotics have been widely used to stimulate the growth of young chickens, cattle, and pigs. It was "discovered" that adding low levels of antibiotics to animal feed improved the consuming animals' weight gain by 10–11%; they are also used to increase egg production. Antibiotics are administered at higher levels in feed or drinking water or by injection in the treatment of various diseases of livestock; 50% or so of antibiotic consumption in the United States is directed at livestock.⁶⁶⁶

There are 750 drug products approved for use in food animals. About 30% of chickens, 80% of veal calves and pigs, and 60% of beef raised for food in the United States are routinely given medicated feed.⁶⁶⁷ Antibiotics approved today by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for growth promotion in animals are: bacitracin, bambemycins, chlortetracycline, erythromycin, lincomycin, monensin, oleandomycin, oxytetracycline, tylosin, and virginiamycin.⁶⁶⁸ Penicillin is being added to the feed and drinking water of salmon, catfish, lobsters, chicken, swine, and turkeys.⁶⁶⁹ Penicillin is widely used to treat mastitis (inflammation of the udder), which at any given time affects more than 25% of the 26 million cattle in the United States. Ironically, although antibiotic treatment has been shown to eliminate one kind of mastitis, it is frequently replaced by another kind of infection.⁶⁷⁰

Penicillin used to treat sick cows or added to animal feed affects the consumers of dairy products. Traces of one antibiotic in food can make a person allergic to other antibiotics given to him for medical purposes. Bacitracin, for example, which is used to promote growth in animal feed, can cause an allergic cross-reaction in humans that may prevent the effective use of kanamycin,

neomycin, streptomycin, and pardomonomycin for the treatment of infections.⁶⁷¹

Only a certain percentage of the population may be allergic to antibiotics and thus be affected by traces of them hidden in food, but the entire population can be affected by another side effect of antibiotic residues. The lacing of animal feed with antibiotics and the subsequent residue in the meat results in the new phenomenon of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Thus, a particular antibiotic may be ineffective when used to treat an infection in humans. Meat, poultry, and humans have become infected with antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria.⁶⁷²

Tetracycline, used to treat calves, sheep, swine, chickens, and turkeys, is also used to treat food-borne illnesses in humans such as *Yersinia pestis*, *Brucella*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Shigella*. In the *Physicians Desk Reference*, which doctors use to find information about the drugs they prescribe, there is a caution about tetracycline,

As with other antibiotics, use of this drug may result in overgrowth of nonsusceptible organisms including fungi. It may also cause hypersensitive reactions such as hives, swelling, anaphylaxis [hypersensitivity to a protein or drug caused by prior contact with that drug], tachycardia [irregular heart beat] and exacerbation of lupus erythematosus [an inflammatory autoimmune disease causing scaly red patches on the skin, especially on the face, and sometimes affecting connective tissue].⁶⁷³

In 1968, the FDA proposed revoking the residue tolerance of chlortetracycline and oxytetracycline in fish and poultry. Today chlortetracycline is cleared for application to raw poultry, fish, scallops, and shrimp to retard spoilage, with a tolerance of 7 ppm (parts per million) for uncooked poultry and a tolerance of 5 ppm for raw marine products. They are still being widely used with the FDA's approval. The residue tolerances for tetracycline in raw poultry and fish were established on the theory that residue in poultry would be destroyed in cooking and residue in raw seafood would not

constitute a danger. However, after years of use, it was discovered this is not the case. Certain antibiotics of the tetracycline class have also been found to strain baby teeth and cause sensitivity to light, skin rash, and liver toxicity as well as interference with kidney function.⁶⁷⁴

Nitrofurans are used extensively in chickens and turkeys and to a lesser extent in swine. Of the two nitrofurans still approved for use in feeds, furazolidone is the most widely used. It and, to a lesser extent, nitrofurazone are used in poultry and swine for growth promotion, feed efficiency, disease prevention, and disease treatment. The US government was advised to stop using nitrofurans as far back as 1979.⁶⁷⁵ According to the *Physicians Desk Reference*, some strains of intestinal bacteria are now resistant to nitrofurans taken as medication primarily to treat urinary tract infections. Furthermore, allergic reactions and lung side effects are not uncommon.⁶⁷⁶

The British curbed antibiotic additives in feed in 1969 after studies in Britain found possible hazards to human health. In 1970, then FDA Commissioner Charles C. Edwards, MD, appointed an 11-member committee to study the use of antibiotics in animal feed and medication. Nothing happened to change the status quo (mostly due to lobbying pressure from the commercialized meat, dairy, and food industries). In 1989, according to a “new risks” assessment made for the FDA by the National Academy of Science’s Institute of Medicine (IOM), the group “was unable to find data directly implicating sub-therapeutic doses of antibiotics in livestock with illnesses in people” or to come up with a “numerical answer” about the risk of animal medication posed to humans.⁶⁷⁷

Physicians from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and Los Angeles County Department of Health reported that they had tracked a California outbreak of antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella* (rod-shaped, gram-negative enterobacteria that causes typhoid fever and food poisoning) in 45 victims to undercooked meat. The meat was then tracked to the slaughterhouse and from there to the dairy farms where the cattle were routinely treated with small doses of antibiotics. Publishing their findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in March 1987, the researchers also indicated that the cre-

ation of antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella* is probably a much greater problem than was previously thought.⁶⁷⁸ The California outbreak occurred when dairy cattle that were routinely fed a number of different antibiotics developed almost untreatable *Salmonella* infections. The cattle were sold to slaughterhouses and meat packers, and eventually turned into hamburger.⁶⁷⁹ The bacteria were carried along at each step in the process and caused infections when undercooked hamburgers were sold in fast-food restaurants or prepared at home from meat sold in supermarkets, the study reported.⁶⁸⁰

Another disturbing example of antibiotics found in animal feed involves sulfa drugs used in chicken, turkey, swine, and cattle feed for growth promotion and disease prevention. In 1988, the *FDA Consumer* noted that a widely used swine and cattle drug, sulfamethazine, was undergoing a safety review.⁶⁸¹ A study by the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) suggests that “moderate to high doses of the drug may cause thyroid cancer in mice — a concern heightened by the fact that the US Department of Agriculture found illegally high residues of sulfamethazine in some pork products.” The majority of hogs on the US market receive sulfa. Sulfamethazine, the leading sulfa drug, has been used for 30 years to treat respiratory diseases and promote faster weight gain in food animals. Animals are supposed to be taken off the drug 15 days before slaughter to ensure that the meat contains no illegal residues. “This may not get rid of all traces, however, if the animals have continued exposure in the environment (for example, in their feed troughs) or in their feed,” the report said. Some people are allergic to sulfa drugs, including sulfamethazine.⁶⁸²

And this is only a drop in the bucket of how man, for reasons pertaining to market forces and personal greed, has poisoned his meat supply with foreign, biologically contaminating chemicals in the most advanced nations of the world. Another major culprit is the use of synthetic hormones. In 1989, the European Economic Community (EEC) began by banning \$130 million worth of American beef imports. The Europeans vehemently objected to the practice of implanting growth-hormone pellets in cattle. The Americans claimed that the EEC’s refusal to purchase American meats treated

with anabolic steroids was actually aimed at lowering surplus beef built up because of the European Economic Community's agricultural policies.⁶⁸³

Europe's concern about implants surfaced after a scandal in Italy in which a baby-food manufacturer illegally injected hormones directly into the muscles of cattle. The baby food produced from this meat contained a concentrated dose of the drugs; infants of both sexes developed breasts, and some of the females began to menstruate. It was the same drug — diethylstilbestrol, a female hormone — that was injected under the skin of cattle, chickens, and turkeys in the United States from 1947–1959, but was banned because it was found that humans were getting residues of the hormone in their poultry. It was still being given to cattle in feed and, in pellet form, in their ears until 1970, when it was finally prohibited because it was known to be a carcinogen. As late as 1983, it was still being purchased on the black market, but the legal use has been stopped.⁶⁸⁴

In the United States, the government permits cattle growers to use three hormones — testosterone, estradiol, and progesterone — and two synthetic hormones — zeranol and trenbolone acetate. Each makes cattle grow faster and bigger. The hormones are implanted under the skin of the animal's ear to provide a steady, small amount of the hormone. Very little of the drug remains in the meat, according to the FDA.⁶⁸⁵ The hormones make a head of cattle 200–300 lb heavier at slaughter, but still lean.⁶⁸⁶

The hormones given to livestock and cattle are primarily growth hormones (GH or somatotropin). These hormones essentially stimulate growth and maturation of tissues, rather than controlling the developmental processes. Bovine growth hormone (BGH or bovine somatotropin) is a genetically engineered hormone designed to increase milk output from dairy cows. The United States FDA approved general use of BGH on cows; its assessment is that meat or milk from BGH-treated cows is nutritionally identical to milk from untreated animals. Arguments surrounding the application of this synthetic drug focus on several issues. Though all milk contains growth hormone, the synthetic drug

differs from the natural bovine growth hormone in structure, by 49 amino acids added from human growth hormone (bovine and human insulin-like growth factors are very similar and are not destroyed by pasteurization). Differences in allergenicity (ability to cause an allergic reaction) can be expected, even though BGH itself seems to be biologically inactive in humans. The hormone increases the level of an insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1) in the cow's milk, higher than that found in human breast-milk, and its effects, if any, on children's upper gastrointestinal tract are said to be unknown. Reported adverse effects in cows include mastitis (infected udders), which requires treatment with antibiotics that could get into the milk. The FDA has issued assurances that milk is tested for antibiotic contamination.

In 1989, controversy emerged over bovine somatotropin (BGH). Though the FDA had not allowed somatotropin to be used commercially, it had been permitting the sale of milk from BGH-treated herds.⁶⁸⁷ Opponents of BGH, in a petition to the FDA, cited scientific evidence that the hormone reduces fertility of cows and increases their susceptibility to infections. They also said that several questions about the effects on human health have yet to be answered.⁶⁸⁸ A veterinarian dismissed from the FDA, Richard J. Burroughs, said in an interview with the *New York Times* that because of the agency's eagerness to approve the drug, important flaws in safety studies submitted by manufacturers were dismissed by his superiors and potential hazards to people and cattle were not thoroughly assessed. Consumer groups, environmentalists, and small farmers may put a damper on what has become a multi-billion dollar food-market. The FDA maintains that BGH is safe in milk because it has always been present in milk. It is produced naturally by the cow's pituitary gland. Some supermarket companies have refused to carry milk from cows treated with the genetically engineered drug because of consumer concern about BGH's safety.⁶⁸⁹

The meat supply has turned toxic and many Muslims, if not all of them, act as if the Qur'an, limited in their minds to a particular time and place, is speaking about meat during the Prophet's (ﷺ) time. The Muslims, especially, are expected to be

alert to the intrusion of man's authority into the natural and social spheres of life. But here we are — sleeping at the steering wheel, while the legal gods of “civilized” society have been busy transforming the *khalq* of Allah (ﷻ), **“And they [the followers of Satan] will, most certainly, alter and shift the conception/composition of Allah” (4:119).**

In the meantime, non-Muslims, taking the initiative, have demonstrated more concern backed up by public activism over the powers that be tampering with the environment and deprecating the natural in nature. In January 1986, a House Government Operations subcommittee (in the USA) issued a report, based on an earlier hearing, on the safety of animal-drug residues in human food. In the report, the subcommittee accused the FDA of failing to protect consumers from traces of veterinary drugs that can turn up in meat, dairy products, and eggs. According to the subcommittee, the FDA was neglecting its legal obligations by allowing the sale and use of thousands of unapproved animal drugs, many of which were actually different versions of the same drug. The report said that highly toxic veterinary prescription drugs were being widely and illegally sold over the counter in blatant disregard of any public health consequences resulting from their misuse. The subcommittee recommended that the FDA reestablish an independent office authorized to ensure that all regulatory decisions regarding animal drugs sufficiently protect the consumers of animal derived foods. The subcommittee added that the agency had failed to restrict or ban some drugs identified as causing tumors in animals and that the FDA should have required companies to devise better methods of detecting residues of drugs in meat. In some cases, no methods of monitoring the retention of drugs in animal tissues had been developed. According to the report,

It is rather remarkable that biologically potent chemicals which are obtainable for medicinal reasons only on prescription by a licensed physician can be used freely in large quantities by persons without any proper training concerning the potential health hazards associated with

the handling and consumption of large quantities of these hormonal substances. Such practices are difficult to control adequately on a nationwide basis in foodstuffs handled in interstate and intrastate commerce by thousands of individual producers in quantities of several million animals...⁶⁹⁰

Dr. Gerald Guest, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, was asked, "If a drug is found to cause cancer, is it supposed to be automatically banned from use in food-producing animals?" Remarkably (and the reader should sit down for this), Dr. Guest replied,

No, not necessarily. A provision of the Delaney anti-cancer clause of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act stipulates that a carcinogenic compound can be used in food-producing animals if the drug will not harm the animals and if "no residue" of the compound will be found in any edible tissues of the animal when tested by the approved methods.

But as analytical methods have become more sensitive over the years, the exception has become unworkable. Levels of residues that were so low they were previously undetectable can now be detected. So we have developed procedures and criteria to permit these exceedingly low levels of residues that present an insignificant risk of cancer to the public.⁶⁹¹

What does Dr. Guest believe is an insignificant risk level?

One in a million. This doesn't mean that one in every million people will contract cancer as a result of this regulation. Rather it represents a one in a million increase in risk over the normal risk of cancer over a lifetime. This is considered an insignificant level of risk.⁶⁹²

Again, though, how much of a cancer-causing agent causes cancer? Dr. Guest agreed that illegal use of veterinary drugs can be,

...an even greater threat to the public health than the illegal use of human drugs. What puts a different light on this issue is that use of illegal human drugs generally involves the consent of the persons involved. But the consumer of meat, milk, and eggs, has no way of knowing if hazardous substances are present in these foods, and no way of knowing if unapproved drugs have been used on the animals.⁶⁹³

What happens if a farmer is caught using illegal veterinary drugs? According to Dr. Guest,

If unsafe drug residues are found in a carcass, the carcass is removed from the slaughterhouse and the USDA will sample the next five animals from that farm. Second, the FDA will send a regulatory letter to the farmer, outlining the violation and warning of more stringent legal action if steps are not taken to correct the problem.⁶⁹⁴

Ironically, the USDA now recognizes what a number of “organic” farmers have known: tender, healthy meat can be obtained from animals that eat a normal diet without growth hormones or antibiotics. The USDA released a five-year study by department researchers that reported low-fat, tender meat can be produced economically by raising ram lambs on a high-forage alfalfa diet. The scientists also said that production of young lean lamb might strengthen markets for domestic lamb.⁶⁹⁵

While veterinary drugs are used deliberately, unintentional additives are also a problem and require vigilance on the part of regulators. More than five years after what has been called the most costly and disastrous accidental contamination ever to occur in United States agriculture, measurable amounts of the toxic chemical known as PBB (polybrominated biphenyl) were detected in hun-

dreds of tissue samples taken from adults across the state of Michigan. The environmental contamination occurred in the Summer of 1973, when an estimated thousand pounds of PBB in the form of a flame-retardant chemical, which was supposed to be used for fire-proofing a variety of plastics, were inadvertently substituted for a chemical additive to be used in livestock feed.⁶⁹⁶

The contaminated feed found its way to hundreds of farms and subsequently into millions of animals and finally into humans. One indication that something was wrong came from dairy farmers who noticed a marked decrease in milk production from their cows, the development of abnormal growths on hoofs, and an increase in the number of aborted calves. Unfortunately, it took seven months to find out what was happening, and during that period contaminated meat and dairy products had been marketed, mostly in Michigan. When the source of the problem finally was traced to PBB-contaminated feed, efforts were made to contain the spread of the toxic chemical, which can accumulate in animal fat, by the state-supervised destruction of more than 30,000 cattle, 1,470 sheep, 5,900 swine, and 1.5 million chickens.⁶⁹⁷

In the late-1970s, reports in the scientific literature began surfacing regarding nervous-system aberrations, alterations in the functioning of the liver, and impaired immune defenses among farm residents who had been widely exposed to PBB in contaminated milk, meat, butter, eggs, and cheese from their own farms. At around the same time, PBB was reported to have been discovered in serum specimens and in breast milk of urban Michigan residents. The finding of PBB in the body fluids of people far from areas where many farm products had been most heavily contaminated suggested that exposure to the chemical contaminant had occurred throughout the state.⁶⁹⁸

Findings that PBBs were still in the bodies of Michigan people five years later, even in those who lived far from the farming areas, prompted a study by Dr. Mary S. Wolff and her colleagues at the Environmental Sciences Laboratory of New York City's Mount Sinai School of Medicine. They found that contamination with PBB spared no section of Michigan, reaching into residents of

urban areas and those living in the remote upper peninsula, as well as into farmers in the most heavily contaminated rural counties. Calculations based on a representative cross-section of the population of Michigan indicated that approximately 97% of that state's residents had measurable PBB in their bodies.⁶⁹⁹

Studies have shown that once PBB gets into human fat, its level does not decline significantly for at least six or seven years and probably much longer. The danger, if any, from persistent PBB levels in fat where it is stored and possibly in other tissues is not known. But as Dr. Dean W. Roberts of Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia indicated in an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* about the PBB disaster, the potential delayed effects from the storage of PBB in the human body are a matter of concern, particularly in light of recent findings showing that PBBs are capable of inducing liver tumors in laboratory rats. Said Dr. Roberts, "In view of the carcinogenesis lag time of up to two or three decades, it will be important to monitor a sample of the exposed population over a prolonged period." Dr. Roberts characterized the finding as dramatic and a reminder of "our vulnerability to the increasing number and volume of potentially toxic chemicals used in manufacturing, agriculture, pest control, and food processing."⁷⁰⁰

In an incident in 1989, 32 cows died in late-April in Texas. Soon after, 10 cows died in Louisiana. The dairy farmers involved sought help from government agents. State and federal inspectors found that a railroad car previously used to transport barium carbonate, a rat poison, had not been properly cleaned before animal feed was transported. Only milk from two herds was found to contain high levels of barium carbonate, and it was dumped.⁷⁰¹

This new phenomenon of non-Muslims being aware of how meat has been tainted and produce has been spoiled has led to the emergence of meat-alternative lifestyles. And so, there are now a variety of meat substitutes in the market. These are fabricated foods that resemble meat in texture and amino acid (protein) content but are essentially devoid of meat or poultry. The most common meat substitutes are based on either single-cell protein or soy

protein. Meat substitutes offer several advantages over meat: they are less expensive, convenient to use, and meet dietary restrictions, such as in low-cholesterol diets. However, certain meat substitutes approach beef in fat content: the fat ranges from 6 g/serving for meatless chicken (36% of calories from fat) to 16 g/serving for meatless bologna (51% of calories from fat).⁷⁰²

Single-cell protein (SCP) meat substitutes are manufactured out of protein obtained from single-celled organisms such as yeast, bacteria, or algae, which can be used as food. Brewer's yeast and torula yeast, produced from fermenting wood residues and other cellulose sources, are used as animal feed. Industry is developing an inexpensive, wholesome protein from yeast, and such yeast protein is being test marketed. Fungus is the source of a protein produced in Britain. This product is high in fiber and low in fat and cholesterol. Its texture and flavor are easily changed to resemble beef or poultry and it is used in frozen meatless pies. The potential for single-cell protein production is huge: 1,000 lb of single-cell organisms can produce 50 tons of protein/day, while a 1,000-pound steer produces only one pound of protein/day and an equal weight of soybeans can produce 80 lb of protein/day. Among problems in converting single-cell protein to food are palatability, protein quality (balanced amino acid content), and digestibility, as well as high content of nucleic acid and possible toxins.⁷⁰³

Protein from soybeans is the most common vegetable meat substitute, marketed as grits, flour, soy protein concentrate (which contains 70% or more soybean as protein), and isolated soy protein (90%). These basic forms can be extruded or spun. Spun soy protein is most often used as meat analogs, simulated (meatless) bacon bits, ham chunks, chicken chunks, hamburger patties, sausages, bacon slices, and turkey chunks, which look and taste like the authentic food but with a different texture. Soy protein meat analogs generally contain fat (partially hydrogenated vegetable oils), artificial coloring and flavoring (possibly monosodium glutamate), soy sauce, and salt. They may be enriched with several vitamins. Soy protein is a nutritious source of protein without cholesterol. It is low in trace minerals like iron and zinc, however.⁷⁰⁴

The “authority” on what to eat or what not to eat will continue to stir up individuals and trouble nations until they find and affirm the authority of Allah (ﷻ). Some people have convinced themselves that a movement away from meat consumption is the right thing to do. In 1993, Americans and others heard the frightening news that 700 people had been poisoned and 4 children had died after eating bacterially contaminated fast-food hamburgers in an American west-coast franchise. In roughly the past half century, incidences of food-borne illnesses have almost doubled, with almost a third of the American population suffering from reactions to various pathogens in food. In fact, what is often thought to be the flu could actually be a case of food poisoning.

Although meat is not the only food subject to microbial contamination, it has a high potential for making people sick, largely because of modern agricultural practices. The majority of today’s livestock is raised in environments based on industrial models. Often animals are crowded together, routinely given antibiotics, exposed to contaminated food and water, and raised in unclean surroundings. Another serious problem results from breeding practices. While the production of near-identical animals may ensure rapid growth, it also makes for animals that are equally susceptible to the same diseases. So it is not uncommon to find *Salmonella* or some other pathogen in an entire flock of chickens, for example. Further stress plagues animals until slaughter, when their meat plus whatever microbes they are carrying gets distributed nationwide. The pollution of chickens presents yet another problem, the creation of tainted eggs. It is no longer safe to add a raw egg to Caesar salad, thanks to *Salmonella*. Many times the bug gets transported from the chicken ovary to the egg and thus becomes part of the package.⁷⁰⁵

Perhaps the most serious problem is with today’s beef, as a new pathogen, *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, is seeping into the food supply. The microbe originates from the toxic *Shigella* bacterium and can cause severe illness and death. Ground beef products are most susceptible. Years ago beef was freshly ground at a local butcher shop. In today’s world, meat from hundreds of cattle, from different states

and countries, is sent to huge processing plants where the meat from different animals gets combined. Thanks to modern, more “efficient” methods, one contaminated cow can now pollute 16 tons of meat. Investigative journalist Nicholas Fox, the author of *Spoiled: Why Our Food is Making Us Sick and What We Can Do About It*, comments on the impossibility of ensuring purity,

The USDA is doing very few spot checks on hamburger, and occasionally they come up with a positive. Oftentimes, that’s when we see a massive recall. But are they checking all of it? They can’t. All you do when you check one little, tiny sample of hamburger is to guarantee that you do or do not have *E. Coli* in that sample. Obviously, that doesn’t say anything else for the vast amount that was probably in that day’s lot. So all hamburger must be considered highly suspect and must be cooked very thoroughly.⁷⁰⁶

Even under the best conditions, though, eating beef can expose consumers to the risk of serious health problems. High in saturated fat and cholesterol, beef increases the risk for hardening of the arteries, heart disease, and a variety of cancerous conditions, including colon, rectal, and breast cancer. Too much animal protein puts stress on two important organs of detoxification: the kidneys and the liver. Also, the uric acid contained in the meat may settle in the joints, causing painful gouty arthritis over time. Numerous gastrointestinal disturbances may result from the ingestion of meat, starting with gas and constipation and leading to more serious illnesses down the road.⁷⁰⁷

There are many people in these circumstances who would suggest that meat be avoided completely. They argue that ordinary people have been brainwashed into believing that meat is essential to good health and point to the design of the human body as proof of the unnaturalness of people eating flesh. Human teeth are flat as opposed to pointy and sharp and thus are better at grinding plants and grains than tearing meat, and the long human digestive tract

resembles those of herbivores. Human beings secrete a special enzyme designed to break down plant foods, whereas carnivores have no such enzyme and possess short digestive tracts for getting rid of meat quickly before it putrefies, not to mention their teeth, which are sharp, not flat.⁷⁰⁸

Going beyond these considerations, many people find it unethical to kill another creature for food when it is not necessary to do so. Indeed, according to this view, non-animal sources of nourishment are both abundant and more healthful than meat. Then too, the earth's resources, both land and water, are much less strained when nutrients are harvested directly from plants, as opposed to the roundabout way of getting them through the animals that eat plants. It's a matter of planetary efficiency.

The health benefits of vegetarianism are being documented all the time in peer-reviewed scientific literature, and more and more physicians are seeing the light in this area. It was back in the 1970s that *The Lancet*, probably the most prestigious medical journal, reported on four cases of angina cured by very simple things: a vegetarian diet, a small amount of exercise, and reducing free fats. The vegetarian diet contained no animal protein. About two years later, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* reported 42 cases of angina treated in this very same way, 38 of which were entirely cured. Four were not cured, but there was a question regarding their compliance with the program. According to the study's authors,

We began looking in earnest for patients who had angina and tried to treat them in this way. We now have over a dozen cases of angina totally cured by the use of just a simple vegetarian routine, no animal protein, a great reduction in free fats, and moderate exercise as the patient can tolerate. We expect to never have a failure with angina.⁷⁰⁹

For many people, the realization that meat is anything other than a food to make one strong and robust is a new and perhaps difficult-to-comprehend concept. Suggestions within this new class of

health-sensitive types are that in order to protect themselves from disease, people would learn to create tasty meatless recipes that promote good health. Some doctors do recommend that their patients have some meat. However, if one does decide to follow such advice, he should be advised that meat should be eaten sparingly and obtained from organically raised sources.

This in the real world is what happens when people, nations, and civilizations do not honor and affirm the authority of Allah (ﷻ). They are constrained to feeling their way around a dark world with bits and pieces of science to show a way out of what is becoming a dietary morass. When will man have the courage and sense to go back to the advice and direction from Allah on these matters? The simple answer is when the Muslims rise to the occasion and take the lead in building an Islamic scriptural world,

In all that has been revealed to me [Muhammad] I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or spilled blood, or the flesh of swine, or animals that have been slaughtered without invoking Allah's name... (6:145).

This matter is determined neither by man's compulsive appetite nor by a government's commercialized priorities. The laws of Allah make no room for food obsession or for generating profit from denaturing food. This *āyah* was revealed in Makkah, and its broad meaning was understood by its listeners. But then in the ensuing years, the *āyāt* in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* were revealed in Madinah — and so there was more detail on what is considered dead meat. In addition, alcohol and intoxicants were banned by the Qur'an, and the consumption of canine wild animals and scavenging birds with claws was proscribed by the Prophet (ﷺ).

Obviously the latter *āyāt* revealed in Madinah and the additional hadiths compose the extended details pertaining to these original four categories of prohibited meat. When the Prophet (ﷺ) delineates and specifies, he outlines the full extent of the meaning in the Qur'an. As an example, when the Qur'an says,

And [forbidden to you in marriage are] all married women other than those whom you rightfully have [through wedlock]: this is Allah's ordinance, binding upon you. But lawful to you [in marriage] are all [women] beyond these, for you to seek out... (4:24),

the word *all* in the final sentence of the *āyah* was qualified by the Prophet in that a husband cannot marry an aunt and her niece at the same time.

Covering the impact of man's greed, expedited by his policy decisions, on society's agriculture and livestock that are the basis of human nutrition — an area unfortunately abandoned by Muslims — does not divert from the subject-matter of this *āyah*; in fact it goes to the very heart of what Allah (ﷻ) is teaching man. A world practically oblivious to the authority of Allah does have, despite all the corporate and monopolistic lobbying propaganda in the public space, scientifically sensitive people who question why vegetation and meat have become what they are, and how farmers, producers, buyers and sellers, officials, and consumers are responsible for this toxic mess the people on the earth find themselves in. With the virtual absence of Muslims, a serious battle rages about whether or not the meat in the grocery stores and supermarkets is nutritious or even edible. In fact, should that stuff sitting on the shelves in the frozen-foods section be even called “meat”? And that white liquid packaged in milk cartons, wherein all of the innate enzymes have been denatured (made inactive) by the pasteurization process, is it right to call that “milk”? There are pro-market scientists who give meat a clean bill of health; but there are pro-health scientists who question and doubt the edible quality of the meat that most people are consuming in the world today. This is of course done strictly on the basis of laboratory tests and human observation. The problem is never pursued to the class of profiteers, merchants, and corporations whose primary concern is financial gain and net income. If we Muslims are being educated by this scripture to avoid meat that has been polluted and poisoned by the animal body's own blood, then why is it so hard for us to understand that meat can be polluted and

poisoned by chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, artificial hormones, and antibiotics?

The thinking Muslim mind equipped with scriptural meanings indicating carrion is *ḥarām* should understand that it is *ḥarām* because of its harm to man's health. The blood interlaced with it makes the flesh toxic, devoid of its natural constitution and texture. Anyone consuming such meat will be impaired in ways understood by modern medicine and science, and in ways not yet understood.

According to the same *āyāt*, gushing blood is also *ḥarām*. One description of such blood is that which flows out of the veins of a slaughtered animal. To some scholars, this means that "flowing blood," or blood in its liquid form, is *ḥarām*. Another consideration of the *āyāt* intimates that blood oozing from a living animal is *ḥarām*, and the ones who hold this view include herein the blood rushing out of an animal's severed veins during the slaughtering process. Along these lines the reasoning goes that "fixed blood" or "pooled blood" such as in the liver or spleen is not *ḥarām*; also the blood remaining in the meat after its ritual slaughter is not *ḥarām*. This is the fine line that separates the Jewish from the Islamic perspective about blood found in kosher or *ḥalāl* meat. A hadith sheds light on this versatile matter,

*Made permissible for us are two dead [animals] and two [types of] blood. The two dead [animals] are fish and grasshoppers; and the two [types of] blood are the liver and the spleen.*⁷¹⁰

Regrettably, the Muslims have not applied their investigative minds to the matter of blood and how its ingestion is harmful to human physiology and well-being. Not only have we been tardy in looking at this whole issue at its roots when man abandons Allah's authority, but we are also behind in keeping up with the studies about carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered without invoking Allah's (ﷻ) name.

The third category prohibits the consumption of swine: all portions of the pig are unfit for human consumption, and this in-

cludes lard and other pig fat. Pork, like carrion and blood, is disgustingly dirty, filled with offensive matter. Human nature that has not been anesthetized by materialism, secularism, and the “science” of modernity is supposed to abhor it. That pork is harmful to man’s health has been covered in previous volumes of this *tafsīr*.

And finally, meat that has been slaughtered while invoking other than Allah (ﷻ) is similarly *ḥarām*, **“And degenerate is meat that has been slaughtered by invoking other than Allah [at the time of slaughter].”** Some cultures or societies, in their ritual animal slaughters, may have called upon idols or given animal offerings to deities other than Allah. Other cultures may have used the slaughtering process to “guarantee” a favorable outcome from a gamble, risk, or divination. All of this renders the meat of such slaughtered animals inedible and *ḥarām*.

But in all this, Allah (ﷻ) nonetheless made an exception, **“But if one is driven by necessity — neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need — then [know that], behold, your Sustainer is much-forgiving, very merciful.”** The necessity in this context refers to hunger, which may force people to eat what they would otherwise not for purposes of survival. Eating or drinking the minimum needed prohibited to survive, without indulging and without contemplating a “second helping,” is permissible.

This lesson relates how far man can derail his society and its public health by opting for man-made decisions and laws that have no basis in scripture and no reference to God’s law. In ancient societies, man-made rules prevented people from consuming certain animals for food or using them for labor, thereby diminishing the overall health and well-being of society. In today’s world, man-made laws alter the nature of animals, more and more now at the genetic level, on market terms for profit, thereby increasingly compromising the optimum health of man.

Consolidating the Islamic menu of what or what not to eat is another *āyah* in the salubrious Qur’an,

...[the Prophet] who will command them to do what is [intrinsically] right and forbid them the doing of what is

[intrinsically] wrong, and make lawful to them the good things of life and forbid them the bad things (7:157).

The word *khabā'ith* (bad things, toxic matter, obnoxious elements) in the above *āyah* refers to what inalienable human nature finds disagreeable, detestable, and distasteful. Included here are the feculent and what are fouled with waste matter, such as rodents, bugs, and pests. Some hadiths supplement this general Qur'anic principle,

On the day of Khaybar, the Prophet (ﷺ) banned eating domesticated *Equus asinus* [domestic beast of burden descended from the African wild ass].⁷¹¹

Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) forbade eating any beast that has a canine tooth (*nāb*), and every bird that has a claw (*mikhlab*).⁷¹²

*[Prohibited are] five raving creatures — all violent — to be killed in sacrosanct and non-sacrosanct months: the crow, the ḥida'aḥ [a certain noxious bird], the scorpion, the rat, and the rabid dog.*⁷¹³

Obviously if these animals are to be killed, they are not to be eaten. Killing is not necessarily slaughtering, or *dhabīḥah*, which is the legal butchering that renders meat *ḥalāl*. Correspondingly, ritualistically and legally slaughtered animals cannot be killed with such an order as is stated in the last hadith above.

In the Islamic literature, there are those who adhere to the literal or verbatim meaning of the *āyah*, and thus refuse to consider other animals inedible. They say that the obvious ingestible *ḥarām* is what is precisely mentioned in these *āyāt*. So if an animal does not fit within the four categories stated in the *āyah*, the holders of this view stop short of saying it is *ḥarām*. This basically represents the Mālikī school of thought as some of its scholars say that eating the meat of wild animals and other animals is permissible; their only exception is human flesh and swine. Abū Dāwūd narrates via Ibn 'Umar that he was asked about eating a hedgehog, and his re-

sponse was to quote this *āyah*.⁷¹⁴ Ibn Abī Ḥātim and others report on good authority that when Umm al-Mu‘minīn ‘Ā’ishah was asked about the permissibility of eating wild animals with canines and birds with claws, she would also quote this *āyah*.⁷¹⁵ ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās said,

No animals are *ḥarām* to eat except what Allah (ﷻ) has mentioned in His Book, when He says, **“Say [O Prophet], ‘In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine — for that, behold, is loathsome — or a sinful offering over which any name other than Allah’s has been invoked...’”** (6:145).⁷¹⁶

And the phrase, **“if one wants to eat thereof”** in the *āyah* relates to ingesting the meat. It does not pertain to tanned leather, hair, wool, etc, as this is further corroborated by an incident in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ),

There was a dead sheep belonging to Sawdah bint Zam‘ah [in another narrative, to Maymūnah]. Thereupon, the Prophet said, *“If only you utilized its animal skin (leather).”* She said, *“Are we to utilize the skin of a sheep that has died?”* To which the Prophet replied, **“Say, ‘In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof, unless it be carrion...’** You are not to eat it; but to convert it into leather and benefit from it.”⁷¹⁷

Philosophical Spin Will Not Save Man on the Last Day

At this juncture, the Qur'an recounts the history of earlier times when the Children of Israel had to prove their obedience quality to God. In the peculiar history of this tribe of previous scripture, God's authority, which had to be honored when it came to dietary rules and definitions, settled upon them in a heavy-handed and sharp-worded way. This allows the adherents of the final scripture and prophet to compare and contrast ancient dietary regulations with the updated and enduring ones in the Qur'an. Therefore, in Allah's accurate words, **"And [only] to those who followed the Jewish faith did We forbid..."** In exclusion to other peoples, it was only the Jews who were disallowed any animal that has claws, and animals with uncloven hoofs, or cloven hoofs of both beasts such as camels and birds such as ostriches, geese, and ducks, with exact definitions being left up to particular Jewish persuasions.⁷¹⁸

As for beef and mutton, in exclusion to other meat, any portion that had extra fat was forbidden. The prohibition included fat that could be easily removed from the meat, and "free" fat, meaning neither attached to meat or bone, that is, what may be found around the stomach and kidney areas. As for the fat located in the "back" and "tail" area of the slaughtered animal, this was permissible for them to eat, **"...and We forbade to them the fat of both oxen and sheep, excepting that which is in their backs or entrails or that which is within the bone."** All of the items listed above, that were made *ḥarām* for the Jews, were no longer so for the Muslims, who would become the enduring bearers of scripture.

Some may ask why God's authority came down so hard and fast on the Jews of that day. This has to do with their psychology of derision, their history of rejection, and their attitude of arrogance when it came to the prophets and scriptures sent to them. As a reminder, these Yahūd were aggressive at the wrong times, they killed or were instrumental in the killing of Prophets (ﷺ), and they were off-and-on roadblocks to the mission of prophets. Developing a compulsive financial behavior that indulged in usury, they erroneously (without any sanction from scripture) considered the immoral acquisition of other people's money to be fair game.

This *āyah* also overturns the Yahūdī assertions that God did not forbid them from eating anything, that they themselves proscribed what Israel (Jacob – ﷺ) withheld from himself. Giving no quarters to their historians, the Qur'an delivers the true version of prior Israeli history. When they say that it was not God who prohibited them from eating certain types of meat, they are, in unequivocal words, lying. Allah (ﷻ) answers them with words that counter their psychology, **“For, behold, We are true to Our word.”** This means that when it comes to the truth, it ensues from Allah, not from the fabricating Yahūdīs.

Allah's words, **“And if they [the Yahūd and the *mushriks*] say that you [Muhammad] are lying, say [to them], ‘Limitless is your Sustainer in His grace...’”** appear to be approaching them through the soft side of their psychology, so as to allow them to respond to His grace and potential forgiveness. But then, **“His punishment shall not be averted from people who are lost in sin...”** confronts their rowdy and unsavory psychology, lest they go further into their conflict with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). Through a number of *āyāt* in this all-inclusive Book, there is a contrast between appealing to the good side of man and confronting his bad side, as is stated in the *āyah* at the end of this *sūrah*, **“Verily, your Sustainer is swift in retribution: yet, behold, He is indeed much-forgiving, positively merciful” (6:165).**

Here, as the Qur'an lays out the facts, the Yahūd and the *mushriks* make their final escapist argument,

Those who are bent on ascribing divinity/authority to any beside Him will say, “Had Allah so willed, we would not have ascribed authority/divinity to any but Him, nor would our ancestors [have done so]; and neither would we have declared as forbidden anything [that He has allowed].” Even so did those who lived before them give the lie to the truth — until they came to experience Our punishment! Say, “Have you any [certain] knowledge that you could proffer to us? You follow but [other people's] conjectures, and you your-

selves do nothing but guess.” Say, “[Know,] then, that the final evidence [of all truth] rests with Allah alone; and had He so willed, He would have guided you all aright” (6:148–149).

What they are saying, in effect, is that they had no free will in deciding who is the authority on such matters in life. In the Islamic record of Muslim history, the notion of free will has proliferated into a vast spectrum of philosophical and dogmatic arguments. Many scholars belonging to “Ahl al-Sunnah,” the Mu‘tazilah, the Mujbiraḥ, and the Murji’ah among others have expressed themselves on the matter. *Determinism*, as developed throughout the philosophical input of generations, is the view that denies human freedom of action; everything is strictly governed by the principle of cause and effect, and human action is no exception. It is the opposite of free will and rules out moral choice and responsibility. In antiquity, the theory of determinism was a feature of Stoicism. In Christian theology, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination is deterministic. Quantum mechanics and the uncertainty principle, it is said, lend support to free will.⁷¹⁹

Determinism contrasts with free will, which is the doctrine that human beings are free to control their own actions, and that these actions are not fixed in advance by God or fate. Some Jewish and Christian theologians assert that God gave humanity free will to choose between good and evil; others that God has decided in advance the outcome of all human choices, as in Calvinism. In these *āyāt*, the Qur’an describes how failing human beings and social orders that declined Allah’s (ﷻ) authority in their collective and personal lives fall back on their argument of predestination. In Christian theology, the doctrine asserts that God has determined all events beforehand, including the ultimate salvation or damnation of the individual human soul.

This whole yo-yo argument that bounces between free will and predestination does not fit into the Islamic thought pattern coming out of an understanding of the thought-provoking Qur’an. All those who are confused by generations of philosophical wran-

gling and are looking for some light out of the darkness, wanting to satisfy their minds about human responsibility and action, should access this Book of clarity forthwith.

Reading here what the *mushriks* and others are saying and then absorbing what Allah (ﷻ) says reveals a clear picture void of intellectual disarray and imaginative hypothetical constructs,

Those who equate other authorities/deities with Allah will say, “Had Allah so willed, we would not have equated [others with Him] nor would our ancestors, and we would not have unauthorized anything [contrary to His will] (6:148).

To absolve themselves from any responsibility, they blame their own intentions and acts on Allah — even their man-made legal systems. Of course, lacking any scriptural knowledge about this cardinal mistake of theirs, they argue without any substantiation. In other words, had Allah willed it, they would never have agreed to conform to semi-gods, demigods, and pseudo-gods. But the prudent Qur’an does not attend to such facile recriminations, denouncing them for lying as those before them lied. And Allah’s reprimand awaits all such liars, **“In the same tradition did the liars before them express their lies until they experienced Our high and mighty response.”** Had they even a trace of conscience left, they would feel the weight of equating other authorities with God.

Speaking to those who direct their mind and intellect in a direction guided by conscience, Allah (ﷻ) asks them to do what they know to be from Him; as to the resulting consequences, they are determined by His calculations and decree,

Say [O Muhammad], “Do you [deniers of Allah’s authority] have any [source] knowledge [of what you are talking about] to present to us? You but follow your own hypothesis [and speculation]; and you but suppose and surmise (6:148).

This is the final word on the subject, and taking it at face value relieves one of the mental tumult associated with philosophical diversions. Allah does not expect man to comprehend His will, nor to see the future. Rather He expects him to work His will as he understands the “dos and the don’ts” that are spelled out clearly in scripture and by prophets. When he does this, he should realize that Allah will gradually move him forward, shed more light on his condition, and open up more doors for him to solve problems.

Had Allah wanted, He could have created the offspring of Adam (ﷺ) in a nature that does what is right, a nature that refuses and cannot do what is wrong. He could have placed a mechanism in man that would have coerced him to act according to virtue and truth. Or He could have molded man’s heart to be anything but evil or disobedient. But His will does not work that way. He created man with the competence to choose the way — either toward Him or away from Him. Those who choose Him will put themselves in position to receive His aid and comfort, while those who deny Him will be given the opportunity to pursue their false direction. This is a social law that comes from Allah (ﷻ) and for man to avoid getting trapped in the inertia of philosophical mystification, he has to understand this **“Say, [Know,] then, that the final evidence [of all truth] rests with Allah alone, and had He so willed, He would have guided you all aright.”**

How much more clarification does the average thinking person need? This impassive attitude of “dodging responsibility” is thrown up by individuals who refuse to listen to what Allah (ﷻ) has to say about this matter. Here, in these *āyāt*, there is no theological polemic or philosophical contestation. Facts pertaining to matter, energy, and the physical world may be and can be verified in laboratories. Facts pertaining to mathematical postulates can be affirmed through logical and systematic proofs. But, as for matters beyond the stretch of human senses and minds, they can only be verified by the authority who gives man accurate and undeniable information. And this is the void the Qur’an fills; it is presented to man free of the controversies and mental conflicts that come with imaginary or deductive materialistic reasoning.

In the final portion of this lesson, the Prophet (ﷺ) is taught by Allah (ﷻ) to face off with the deniers of His authority and those who diminish it. The central issue here, as in much of the Qur'an, remains "authority." The *mushriks*, who are responsible for much of the strife and unsettledness of the world, are being outed by these *āyāt*, and hence will have to go on record as to their true identity and intentions. This was the case at the beginning of this *sūrah*,

Say, "What could most weightily bear witness to the truth?" Say, "Allah is witness between me and you; and this Qur'an has been revealed to me so that on the strength thereof I might warn you and all whom it may reach." Could you in truth bear witness that there are other authorities side by side with Allah? Say, "I bear no [such] witness!" Say, "He is the One God; and, behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity/authority, as you do, to any beside Him!" (6:19);

and the same is reiterated here,

Say, "Bring forward your witnesses who could testify that Allah has forbidden [all] this!" — and if they bear witness [falsely], do not bear witness with them; and do not follow the errant views of those who have contradicted Our messages, nor of those who are unconvinced of the life to come, and who regard other powers as their Sustainer's equals! (6:150).

The two persuasions on authority — those who affirm worldly and man-made authorities and those who affirm the authority of Allah, and only Allah (ﷻ) — could not be more at odds: a showdown, a confrontation, and a collision course. This *dīn* of self-surrender to Allah (Islam) does not discriminate between those who are guilty of *shirk* because they conform to deities beside Allah and those who are guilty of *shirk* because they comply with authorities beside Allah. Authorities are gods by definition because they rule

and compel people to obey their laws and abide by their value systems. All people in positions of rule and decision-making who claim to honor God the Lord and Sustainer while forsaking God the Lawgiver are lying about the meaning of God. This means that the accountability in the life to come has no impact on their decisions today; and the God they will most certainly meet has been dismissed from their lives for all practical purposes. Thus, they have no difficulty demoting the true God to the stratum of man's temporal life and elevating themselves up to the status of the divine authority. In this fashion they correspond themselves and others with God as authority.

Allah (ﷻ) considers all lawmakers, rulers, and legislators who put their own laws into effect by their own formal and official declarations without due consideration to the authority of Allah (ﷻ) to be imposters and liars. They may try to cover up their misconduct by contending that their laws do come from God, but their arguments are transparent because the scripturally and spiritually enlightened in their own societies know that God is not the reference authority in man's state of social being. All the power structures in the physical world bear witness that Allah is the Creator, the Provider, and the Sustainer. Thus He is the only Proprietor. It follows, therefore, that He become the only Ruler. Anyone who tries to run away from this fact is convoluting the truth. All the *āyāt* of this Qur'an bespeak this truth. The moral intensity of the Islamic character requires a complementary social environment to preserve it.

Individuals, elites, and classes that claim to "believe" in the life to come and then spend their whole life playing the role of God, do not, in fact and in reality, have much or any consideration for the Ultimate Day when they will have to acknowledge their worldly record. No serious or straightforward person in this life can steal the authority and authoritative attribute of God, misrule according to personal gain or corporate priorities, and then appear in public saying that he is a firm believer in the Final Day. Nonsense. If they were true to their human nature and Allah's divine nature they would have ceded authority in this world and worked His will

through their subservience to Him — with humility and appreciation. Other people at the popular level of society who look forward to the Last Day should not accept worldly usurpers of God's authority; for they will have to atone for the burden of living a social life without a divine authority and not doing anything about it.

The Ten Commandments of Islam

After this round in which the legal and social considerations of *shirk* were outlined, Allah's words move on to the underlying prohibitions. The fact of life is that beneath every legal deviation or social dysfunction lies its justification or rationalization. The wisdom in these *āyāt* induces the committed Muslims to break through social constructs and get to their mental and psychological essence. This is where *shirk* is to be found. It is futile to prohibit the consumption of foul substances when the heart and mind are averse to Allah's sole authority in that determination, hence,

Say, "Come let me convey to you what Allah has [really] forbidden you: do not ascribe divinity/authority, even in the slightest, to any beside Him; and [do not offend against but, rather] do good to your parents; and do not kill your children for fear of poverty — [for] it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them; and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being's life — [the life] that Allah has declared to be sacred — other than in [the pursuit of] justice: this has He prescribed for you so that you might use your reason. And do not touch the [financial] substance belonging to an orphan — save to improve it — before he comes of age."

And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight, with equity; [however], We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear. And when you voice an opinion, be just, even though

it be [against] one near of kin. And [always] observe your bond with Allah: this has He advised you, so that you might keep it in mind.

And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way. [All] this has He counseled you, so that you might remain conscious [of His power presence and overwhelming authority] (6:151–153).

These *āyāt* may be entitled “The Ten Commandments.” Therein are ten acts, either encouraged or proscribed,

1. refraining from *shirk*;
2. kindness toward parents;
3. prohibition of infanticide;
4. prohibition of offensive mannerism;
5. prohibition of killing without the due process of justice;
6. preservation of the orphan’s possessions;
7. honoring commercial transactions dealing with volume;
8. honoring commercial transactions dealing with weight;
9. observing the standards of justice in matters of speech and governance; and
10. honoring a pledge.

First, Allah (ﷻ) advises man to not assign divinity/authority to anyone besides Him — not to any galactic thing or earthly being; not to the Sun, the Moon, or the planets; and not to the angels, prophets, or saints. All are creatures made and created by Allah to be His subjects and subordinates, “**Not one of all [the beings] that are in the heavens or on earth appears before the Most Gracious other than as a servant**” (19:93). All intelligent life is expected to willfully and voluntarily conform to Him when it assumes any responsibility or duty.

Second, committed Muslims are required to go beyond what is deemed necessary when it comes to being forthcoming and supportive of parents. This should come from the depths of feelings

and reasoning in man. Often, in the Qur’an, Allah’s sole authority is mentioned in close proximity to motivating Muslims to be kind and compassionate to their parents. Allah (ﷻ) is the provider of sustenance and the parents are its purveyors. They spend virtually all their lives supporting their children — nourishing them, nurturing them, feeding them, loving them, protecting them, helping them, and providing for them. Two of the other supportive *āyāt* with these general meanings include,

And your Sustainer has decreed that you conform to no one except Him. And be benevolent to parents. Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say “Uff” [an expression of annoyance] to them or scold them, but [always] speak to them with reverent speech (17:23);

That is, give thanks to Me and to your parents, [and remember that] to Me shall be your destiny. And if they [parents] struggle to make you equate others with Me to that which you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, but stay on good terms with them in this world (31:14–15).

Misbehaving toward parents is considered a serious offense in Islam. By contrast, honoring and loving them is one of the best deeds in life. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd related the following,

“I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) which is the best of deeds?” He replied, “*Communion with Allah at the appointed time.*” Then I asked, “What comes next?” He added, “*Being good-natured and magnanimous toward parents.*” I asked again “Then what?” [And] he said, “*Jihad for the cause and on a course to Allah.*”⁷²⁰

Honoring one’s parents means to treat them with attention and compassion borne of love and respect, not of fear or tension. This

becomes a generational trait, from one family of contemporaries to the next.

Third, **“And do not kill your children for fear of poverty...”** The *āyah* moves seamlessly, but progressively, from being kind and compassionate to parents to being supportive and sustaining of children and grandchildren. Poverty and scarce resources should never “extort” parents to kill their children, as Allah (ﷻ) will provide for all of them, parents and children alike. The children’s sustenance by their parents follows from the parents’ sustenance by Allah. It is taboo for committed Muslims to fear impoverishment or penury, which should never force a Muslim father and mother to choose between themselves and the children of the family. It is Allah who provides for people their nourishment and livelihood, **“And do not kill your children out of fear of poverty; We will provide for them and you. Killing them is a grave mistake” (17:31).**

In the general meaning of the word, *infanticide* is the killing of a child under 12 months old by its mother or father. More generally, the term refers to any killing of a newborn child, usually as a method of population control and most frequently of girls (especially in India and China), although boys are killed in countries where bride prices are high. On further consideration, and in most of the cases, if not all, the triggering mechanism for such criminal behavior is the state of having little or no money and few or no material possessions. This is a very good example of how the overabundance of wealth in some people’s possession corresponds to overwhelming poverty in other people’s lives. This also illustrates how *zakāh* ought to follow seamlessly from *ṣalāh*.

Fourth, **“And do not draw near to offensive mannerisms...”** This would include all felonies and misdemeanors, major offenses and delinquency, both of the verbal and behavioral kind. In particular, the wording here may be referring to adultery and all sorts of social and sexual defamation, be they in private or in public. The pre-Islamic Arabians would consider surreptitious adultery to be acceptable, but would disparage adultery as a “public service or profession.” This and other *āyāt* make it clear that adultery is *ḥarām* however it is done,

Say, “Verily, my Sustainer has forbidden only shameful deeds, be they open or secret, and [every kind of] sinning, and unjustified definnace, and the ascribing of divinity/authority to any beside Him — since He has never bestowed any warrant therefor from on high — and the attributing unto Allah of any of which you have no knowledge” (7:33).

And in a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ), “There is no one more protective of [the value of] honor than Allah; and for that He has prohibited flagrant immoral behavior — whether it is in the open (*ḡahara*) or concealed (*baṭana*).”⁷²¹ Another understanding of the verb *ḡahara* here is *doing whatever is physically immoral*; as for *baṭana*, it refers to *doing what is psychologically immoral* such as arrogance and envy.

Fifth, “And do not take any human being’s life — [the life] Allah has declared to be sacred — other than in [the pursuit of] justice.” Murder, that is, killing without just cause, is forbidden in the most emphatic of terms. Even though this act of killing may be included in offensive behavior and thus in the category above, the deed is so heinous, shockingly brutal, and cruel, that it had to be singled out. The sanctity of human life is a God-given must upon man.

The only serious violation that lifts this protection of human life from wanton extermination is the act of warring against Allah (ﷻ), His Prophet (ﷺ), and the committed Muslims. When armies and armadas are commissioned to silence the Islamic word, stifle Islamic communication, and prohibit Islamic knowledge to those who are ignorant of it, then such forces and powers — made up as they are of human beings — expose themselves to the danger of death by the standards of Islamic justice. There cannot be any personnel, violence, or aggression that physically impede the free communication of Islam in its untainted form. The oft-quoted hadith below, usually cherry-picked by Islam’s enemies, must be understood in this context,

I have been ordered to fight lodges of people until they bear witness that there is no deity/authority except Allah and that

*Muhammad is His Messenger, and they standardize the ṣalāh, and they systemize the zakāh; and if they do that they sanctify their lives and wealth — except if they violate the justice of Islam — and their reckoning is with Allah.*⁷²²

Beyond the transcultural, transnational, and trans-religious responsibility of communicating Islam to everyone, there remains the issue of capital punishment when a person can no longer plead that his life is sanctified. Capital punishment has its pros and cons in the non-scriptural world. Secular societies have debated this issue back and forth *ad infinitum*. Their capital punishment is a sentence of death passed by a judicial body following trial. Capital punishment in the West and its satellites has been abolished in some countries like Britain since 1969, although proposals for its reinstatement are regularly debated by parliament, and it theoretically remains the penalty for treason and certain other statutory offenses. It is still practiced in a number of states in the United States of America, and in many other countries. Where the sentence of death is available as a penalty for a capital crime, it is not invariably carried out; a head of state or other authority can recommend a reprieve. Countries employ a variety of procedures in carrying out executions, including lethal injection, electrocution, hanging, gassing, and shooting.⁷²³

Capital punishment in the United States — the end-all and be-all of today's slaves of materialism — amounts to the death penalty for the conviction of a serious crime, now generally limited to murder. Electrocution is the most commonly used method of execution; lethal gas, hanging, and lethal injection are also employed. In 1972, the US Supreme Court declared the death penalty, as then applied in the United States, to be cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution (*Furman v. Georgia*). The court found that capital punishment was assigned in an apparently arbitrary manner, for a variety of crimes, and mainly to blacks and the poor. Many states since then have reinstated the death penalty, as has the US Congress (for crimes connected with drugs and aircraft hijacking), using a two-

stage process in which sentence is determined in a second trial after a finding of guilt, wherein specified legislative guidelines are used to determine whether mitigating circumstances justify a sentence other than death.⁷²⁴

In the secular, scripture-less — more to the point, Qur'an-less — world capital punishment has long been debated on both moral and legal grounds. Many authorities question its utility as a deterrent to crime, while others abhor it for religious and moral reasons. The number of executions in the United States had decreased dramatically since the 1960s, due in part to the reluctance of judges and juries to assign the death penalty and in large measure to pressure from civil rights groups, who pointed to the extraordinarily high proportion of blacks sentenced to death compared to whites guilty of similar offenses (53% of all persons executed from 1930–1965 were blacks). In the decade of 1930–1939, 1,666 persons were executed; 716 in the decade 1950–1959; fewer than 200 in the decade 1960–1969, with only one execution in 1967, and then none until 1977. When the Supreme Court decided *Furman v. Georgia* in 1972, more than 600 convicts were awaiting execution, over half of whom were members of minority groups.⁷²⁵

In 1976, the Supreme Court declared that capital punishment was not inherently cruel and unusual punishment and upheld a sentence of death where the two-step process was used (*Gregg v. Georgia*). At the same time, it struck down the application of mandatory death sentences (*Woodson v. North Carolina*) and, a year later, declared the death penalty invalid for rape (*Coker v. Georgia*). Executions were renewed with the shooting of Gary Mark Gilmore at the Utah State Prison in 1977. The Supreme Court continued to monitor sentences of death with great care, insisting on clearly defined statutes and on a trial record of careful consideration of possible mitigating circumstances by judges and juries (*Beck v. Alabama*; *Godfrey v. Georgia*).⁷²⁶

As the pace of death sentences picked up, the Court began to receive and disapprove of repeated appeals and last-minute delays accompanying each scheduled execution. In 1984, in *Pulley v. Harris*, the Court resolved a major issue by holding that a state

court need not review a death sentence to ensure its “proportionality” to the punishment imposed upon others for similar offenses. A 1986 decision, *Lockhart v. McCree*, permits exclusion of jurors who oppose the death penalty from serving in two-stage capital trials. In other cases, the Court held that an insane person may not be executed (*Ford v. Wainwright*), that a state may not mandate the death penalty for any crime (*Sumner v. Shuman*), and that the death penalty may not be imposed for a crime committed when under the age of 16 (*Thompson v. Oklahoma*). Debate over the validity of capital punishment virtually ended in 1987 when the Court ruled in *McCleskey v. Kemp*, that, in the absence of clear proof of purposeful discrimination, the death penalty is valid despite clear statistical evidence that blacks are more likely to receive the death penalty than are whites and that those convicted of slaying whites are more likely to receive the death penalty than those who murder blacks. Subsequently, the pace of executions quickened. About 2,000 inmates, almost all male and about half members of minority groups, were on death row in 1988. Today the figure is higher than that.⁷²⁷

This represents yet another example of how systems and societies muddle their way through when they take God as a deity without authority, **“This [penalty of death from on high] has He counseled you [with] so that you might use your reason.”** It boggles the mind how a Western civilization that prides itself on its enlightenment and intellectual accomplishments loses its mind whenever the subject matter of Islam, the Qur’an, and the Prophet (ﷺ) is brought up.

Sixth, **“And do not come near the orphan’s wealth — save to improve it...”** All guardians and sponsors of orphans are put on notice not to appropriate the orphan’s wealth and belongings, except for what is needed to manage the orphan’s immediate needs and well-being. The Qur’an, Allah’s loving words, often puts extra emphasis on the care and protection of orphans,

Behold, those who offensively devour the possessions of orphans but fill their bellies with fire, for [in the life to come] they will have to endure a blazing flame! (4:10).

In common English, this would be rendered into something like “Don’t even think about touching the orphan’s assets.” Additional instructions in this regard are to be found in *Sūrah al-Nisā’*,

And test the orphans [in your care] until they reach a marriageable age; then, if you find them to be mature of mind, hand over to them their possessions; and do not consume them by wasteful spending, and in haste, before they grow up. And let him who is rich abstain entirely [from his ward’s property]; and let him who is poor partake thereof in a fair manner. And when you hand over to them their possessions, let there be witnesses on their behalf — although none can take count as Allah does (4:6).

This means that an orphan’s possessions, assets, and valuables are not to be tampered with under any circumstances by those who are his overseers and caretakers until the orphan reaches the age of responsibility and adulthood.

Seventh and eighth, **“And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight, with equity...”** Where he is party to a transaction, a committed Muslim is required to be vigilant, to not tip the scale either in his favor or in the other party’s. Another collection of *āyāt* in this Book of fairness speak to this issue,

Woe to those who give short measure: those who, when they are to receive their due from [other] people, demand that it be given in full, but when they have to measure or weigh whatever they owe to others, give less than what is due. Do they not know that they are bound to be raised from the dead [and called to account] on an awesome Day — the Day when all men shall stand before the Sustainer of all the worlds? (83:1–6).

An undeniable characteristic of man is that he is “commercial.” Commerce needs monitoring lest greed and market forces corrupt

certain commercial activities into risk bordering on speculation and collusion bordering on monopoly. In the hyper-commercialized United States, there is something known as “unfair trade practice.” This means any business activity that deceives or misleads consumers and results in their being sold shoddy, dangerous, or overpriced goods or services. Examples of unfair trade practices include false and misleading advertising, misbranding, improper labeling, conspiracies to fix prices, collusive bidding, discrimination against buyers, price cutting to eliminate competition, and other practices in restraint of “free” trade.⁷²⁸

Unfair trade practices were outlawed by the US Congress in two laws enacted in 1914, the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act. The former forbids price discrimination, price cutting to restrain trade, and purchases of stock among competitors. The latter seeks to promote fair competition and, through the Wheeler-Lea Act amendments of 1938, outlaws unfair and deceptive practices and false advertising of foods, drugs, cosmetics, and other commodities. Both acts are administered by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Consumer interests are also protected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which safeguards against misbranding, adulteration, and false labeling.⁷²⁹

Nations and societies can self-destruct when they are not sufficiently meticulous in their commercial character and forthrightly fair in their transactions. The “human factor” within the US was more attuned to this fact in the recent past than it is now. Commissioners for the FTC, a five-member independent regulatory commission to promote fair competition in business, are appointed by the US president with the Senate’s approval for seven-year terms. It seeks to prevent illegal combinations in restraint of trade, deception, price discriminations, price fixing, interlocking directorates, and other business activities that reduce competition or endanger or defraud the consumer. The operations of the FTC include making rules and regulations to establish a code of fair competition, holding hearings concerning alleged violations, and enforcing decisions through cease and desist orders and injunctions granted by federal courts.⁷³⁰

Most of the work of the FTC is carried out by persuading business people to cease activity of doubtful legality. The Commission plays a relatively minor role in enforcing anti-monopoly legislation and directs most of its efforts to protecting consumer interests by preventing deceptive advertising, fraud, and the sale of dangerous products. Although the duties of the FTC are varied, its underlying purpose is to strengthen the free enterprise system by preventing corrupt practices and by keeping competition both free and fair. Yet it has often come under attack from critics who charge it with being pro-business and not energetic enough in protecting the rights of consumers.⁷³¹

“Bulky” commercial societies when confronting a failing morality begin to depend on legality for their continued functionality. Thus, a society like the American one has independent regulatory commissions. These are agencies, outside the purview of major executive departments, charged with the regulation of important aspects of the economy. The various independent commissions include the Interstate Commerce Commission, Federal Trade Commission, Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Communications Commission, National Labor Relations Board, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Federal Reserve Board, Federal Maritime Commission, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. All of these agencies are empowered to establish rules for the particular industries they regulate and to prosecute violators. All are headed by five- or seven-member panels.⁷³²

The independent regulatory commissions possess vast authority to determine individual and property rights. They have been established because of the sheer complexity of modern economic problems and the desirability of having agencies that could develop expertise and continuity of policy with regard to these problems. Neither the US Congress nor the courts have the talent or the time to deal with market complexities. The agencies are independent of the president in order that their quasi-legislative and adjudicatory functions be removed from partisan politics. Members of the commissions are appointed by the president with the US Senate’s con-

sent, but may be removed only for cause. Terms of office are lengthy and overlapping in order to avoid dominance by the appointees of one president, though turnover is quite frequent. No more than a simple majority of commissioners may be of one party. Problems arise from the tendency of commissions to become captives of the industries they are supposed to regulate, since many officials are necessarily drawn from the regulated industries. Further, the independence of the commissions may result in policies that are contrary to those of the party in power. These commissions have often been called “the headless fourth branch” of government, because of their peculiar place in the organization of the government and lack of continuing supervision for the president or congress. Most are targets of those seeking to “deregulate” the economy, which in some sectors, notably transportation and communications, has been substantially accomplished.⁷³³

The commercial “animal” with all these agencies and regulations cannot be tamed if the human conscience is not elevated and the human mind is secondary to whims and personal interests. Even with all the agencies, commissions, and departments in “advanced” industrialized countries at work trying to tame the commercial beast, these nations and societies have not been able to stem the downward slide. And this is all because they are guilty of *shirk*, equating or subsuming Allah’s authority with “authorities” of their own. No wonder the Qur’an brings to its readers the ancient experience of a society that was told by its Prophet Shu‘ayb (ﷺ),

Hence, O my people, [always] give full measure and weight, with equity, and do not deprive people of what is rightfully theirs, and do not act fraudulently on earth, spreading corruption (11:85).

Ninth, “**And when you voice an opinion be just, even though it be [against] one near of kin.**” The Islamic character of men and society that is nurtured by the Qur’an is one of authenticity and justice when it comes to public statements, statements in a court of law, utterances in the market, personal conversations, etc.

Even if it were to hurt the feelings of close relatives, family members, or kinfolk, justice does not tolerate any kind or flavor of bias. Justice is the basis of governance, the cornerstone of organizations, and the foundation for social progress.

O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Be ever steadfast in upholding equity, bearing witness to the truth for Allah's sake, even though it be against your own selves or your parents and kinfolk. Whether the person concerned be rich or poor, Allah's claim takes precedence over [the claim of] either of them (4:135).

Justice and equity are to be observed at both the individual as well as the social level.

And finally (tenth), **“And [always] honor your pledge with Allah...”** The committed Muslims honor this pledge — which consists of the combination of Qur'an and Prophet (ﷺ) as their immutable reference points in life and death — by observing it in their daily lives, by incorporating it into their routine as well as extraordinary tasks, and by abiding to a behavior that turns morality into social norms. This is how the committed Muslims become the upholders of all prophets and what they were divinely endowed with of sound judgement and clean conscience, **“Did I not entrust you, O you children of Adam, that you should not comply with Satan — since, verily, he is your open foe...” (36:60).** Besides, the Muslims have already committed to this pledge even though their memories have no clear recollection of that moment, and so Allah (ﷻ) reminds them, **“And be true to your pledge to Allah whenever you bind yourselves by a pledge” (16:91).** Honoring their pledge with Allah means that they follow through on their pledges to each other as social and human beings, **“And [truly observant of Allah's power are] those who keep their promises and pledges whenever they make a vow... (2:177).**

“This He has advised you, so that you might keep it in mind.” The Qur'an is speaking to man's conscience, mind, and reasoning, yet, in one of the more amazing twists in the contem-

porary secular world of imperialism and Zionism, its detractors accuse Islam of ignorance, emotionalism, and reaction. All of these ten commandments are intertwined with the notion of thinking things through, for doing so with the words of the Qur'an and the model of the Prophet (ﷺ) as the reference points is what leads straight to Allah. Human beings who filter their thinking, and ultimately their behaviors, through their own ill-defined reference points meander their way to confusion, degradation, subjugation, oppression, and tyranny. And this is what Allah (ﷻ) is emphasizing here, **“And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me...”** All other avenues of multiple authorities, conflicting references, and irreconcilable judges lead to further personal instability and social upheaval.

Why are we tolerating *shirk*? Why are parents and family life no longer bound together by love and affection? Why are infants being killed in the womb, in maternity wards at hospitals, in the crib at home, or in any number of other cultural killing contexts? Why do offensive mannerisms, which trickle down to the middle and lower classes, appear to be the norm in upper-class society? Why is infidelity in, and marital loyalty out? Why are mass murderers people of class, status, and protocol when they should be put on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity? Why are orphans sub-human; and why in today's world are there societies that have orphan status? Why is there an imbalance in economic, trade, and financial relations in this world of ours? Why are the concepts of justice and equity dismissed from any social discussion or political theory? Why is treachery popular? And finally why are we, the Muslims, either ignorant of or ignoring these critical issues?

This is a serious matter. The committed Muslims have the duty and obligation to circulate these meanings throughout the desperate populations and failing societies of the world, **“You shall most definitely explain and clarify this [message] to people, and never conceal it” (3:187)**. The Muslims' silence or apathy on these issues is costing humanity tens of millions of people who are literally subsisting on starvation. The Muslims' abdication of the responsibility to prioritize justice in the social and political arenas,

and equity in the economic arena, has thrown the door wide open for the imperialists and capitalists, racists and Zionists, kings and heads of state to move in and usurp Allah’s authority, replacing His commands with their “policies.”

The *āyāt* of this *sūrah* were structured and communicated in this way so as to enable ordinary people to understand why elites with wealth and power at their disposal do not want religion to “intrude” into issues of politics and economics. Their status, escorted by the corruption infusing it through and through, is threatened by the scripturally enlightened mind that seeks to subject matters of jurisprudence, legislation, and statutory law to the divinity and authority of Allah (ﷻ), without which there could be no impartiality in the adjudication of justice, and no ambiance for the flourishing of mercy. Keeping “religion” out of “politics” and “politics” out of “religion” — or separating the domain of God (authority) from the domain of man (compliance) — is the oldest trick in Satan’s book. In fact Satan is just a one-trick pony: all of his other tricks are just disguised variations of this underlying one. Falling for this trick and acceding to the rationalizations that go with it are what has permitted Satan’s affiliates to thrive generation after generation, and in society after society. Even non-Muslims — who seemingly are little acquainted with the Qur’an, Islam, or Muhammad (ﷺ), but have imbibed their direction by virtue of having to endure the hypocrisy of their so-called free societies — understand what is too obvious to ignore; consider the opening lyrics of the Rolling Stones’ song, *Sympathy for the Devil*, sung some five decades ago,

Please allow me to introduce myself
 I’m a man of wealth and taste
 I’ve been around for a long, long year
 Stole many a man’s soul to waste

And I was ’round when Jesus Christ
 Had his moment of doubt and pain
 Made damn sure that Pilate
 Washed his hands and sealed his fate

Pleased to meet you
Hope you guess my name
But what's puzzling you
Is the nature of my game...⁷³⁴

Man’s Unity Comes from God’s Authority

As *Sūrah al-An‘ām* begins to reach its end, the *āyāt* recall the fact that a scripture was revealed to the people of Mūsá (ﷺ), “...with details of everything and as a guidance and grace so that they may be confident and committed to their [eventual] encounter with their Lord” (6:154). That is followed by a reminder of what this holy Book is all about, so that the Muslims become actively on guard pertaining to Allah’s power and thus deserve His grace. The whole spectrum of scripture is laid out; therefore no one can have an excuse to be left in the dark about matters of direction, guidance, and redemption.

If all that this final Messenger (ﷺ) has clarified and brought is not sufficient for those who ask instead for miracles and the supernatural, then these types will in due time learn that they are expediting their own ruin because they will nonetheless defy God even after He grants them what they requested,

Do they expect anything except angels coming to them, or your Sustainer coming to them, or some percentage of His power manifestations (*āyāt*)? When some of Your Sustainer’s *āyāt* do come, a self shall not be redeemed by its faith if that faith was not a commitment of duration or a commitment attaining effusion. Say, “Anticipate; for we are certainly in anticipation” (6:158).

Allah’s words draw a “red line” between the Messenger (ﷺ) and his *dīn* on one side and those who go about legitimizing and delegitimizing on the other side, oblivious of Allah’s set of laws. Some of them devise their own laws and then legitimize them by saying they are God’s laws,

Indeed, as for those who have fragmented their *dīn* and become factions, you have nothing to do with them. Their affair shall be referred to Allah. Then He will tell them [the truth about] what they were doing (6:159).

The meaning here is clear and unequivocal: Muhammad (ﷺ) has nothing to do with the secular lawgivers; neither does he relate to them in any way whatsoever, nor does he belong to them an iota's worth. At the end of a *sūrah* about laws, law-giving, the Lawgiver, legality, and legitimacy, the final word on this integral part of *dīn* is issued.

- (6:154) Thereafter, We vouchsafed the divine Writ unto Moses in fulfillment [of Our favor] upon those who persevered in doing good, clearly spelling out everything, and [thus providing] guidance and grace, so that they might have faith in the [final] meeting with their Sustainer.
- (6:155) And this, too, is a divine Writ that We have bestowed from on high, a blessed one: follow it, then, and be conscious [of Allah's power] so that you might be graced with His mercy.
- (6:156) [It has been given to you] lest you say, "Only upon two groups of people, [both of them] before our time, has a divine writ been bestowed from on high — and we were indeed unaware of their teachings;
- (6:157) Or lest you say, "If a divine writ had been bestowed from on high upon us, we would surely have followed its guidance better than they did." And so, a clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer, and guidance, and grace. Who, then, could be more wicked than he who gives the lie to Allah's messages, and turns away from them in disdain? We shall requite those who turn away from Our messages [of power] in disdain with severe suffering for having thus turned away!
- (6:158) Do they, perchance, wait for the angels to appear to them, or for your Sustainer [Himself] to appear, or for some of your Sustainer's [final] portents to appear? [But] on the Day when your Sustainer's [final] portents do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not commit [to Allah] before, or who, while having done so, did no good works. Say, "Wait, [then, for the Last Day, O de-

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا
 لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَهَذَا
 كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ أَنْ
 تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ عَلَىٰ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِن قَبْلِنَا وَإِن كُنَّا عَن
 دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا
 أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيْنَهُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً
 فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَذَبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ
 يَصْدِفُونَ عَن آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ هَلْ
 يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ
 رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ
 مِن قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا قُلِ انظُرُوا إِنَّا مُنظِرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى
 اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ
 أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾
 قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَىٰ رَبِّيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي
 لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾
 قُلْ أَغْيَرَ اللَّهُ آبِئِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا
 عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزْرُ وَاِزْرَةً وَرَزَّ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
 كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم مَّا خَلَقَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ
 بَعْضُكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَآءَاتِكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ
 الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

niers of Allah's power]; behold, we [the committed Muslims] are waiting, too!"

- (6:159) Verily, as for those who have shattered the integrity of their *dīn*, thus becoming [rival] partisans, you have nothing to do with them. Behold, their case rests with Allah; and in time He will make them understand what they were doing.
- (6:160) Whoever shall come [before Allah] with a good deed will gain ten times the like thereof; but whoever shall come with an evil deed will be requited with no more than the like thereof; and none shall be wronged.
- (6:161) Say, "For sure my Sustainer has guided me to a direct track — a *dīn* of values, the worldview of Ibrāhīm who turned away from all that is false, and was not of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him."
- (6:162) Say, "In truth my reverent petition, my sacrifice relationship [with Allah], my life, and my death belong to Allah, the Sustainer of the worlds,

- (6:163) In whose divinity/authority none has a share: for thus have I been bidden — and I shall [always] be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him.”
- (6:164) Say, “Am I, then, to seek a sustainer other than Allah, when He is the Sustainer of all things?” And whatever wrong any human being commits rests upon himself alone; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another’s burden. And, in time, unto your Sustainer you all must return: and then He will make you [truly] understand all that on which you were wont to differ.
- (6:165) For, He it is who has made you inherit the earth, and has raised some of you by degrees above others, so that He might test you by means of what He has bestowed upon you. Verily, your Sustainer is swift in retribution: yet, behold, He is indeed much-forgiving, properly merciful (al-An‘ām:154–165).

Invoking the divine Writ that was revealed to Moses (ﷺ) fits in with the general ambiance of this *sūrah* as issues of authority and regulation are brought to the fore; in particular, from among all the prophets, Moses is the one who stands out with a scripture of regulations and strictures. The Torah is reminiscent of the Ten Commandments; and here those commandments are given a thorough rehabilitation. Given that the pre-Islamic Arabians were aware of the religious status of the Jews, and hence held a special reverence for the Torah, when the Qur’an was also revealed as a book of guidance and the good word, they should have been beside themselves with excitement over the Qur’an.

The Torah is mentioned in the Qur’an more than the Injil (revelation to Prophet Jesus) or the Zabūr (revelation to Prophet David). It may be that the content matter of the former two is alike in many respects; there are more issues of “law” in these two than in others. Each scripture is, in a sense, a complete and comprehensive social program. From what is known of the Injil, it was a scripture of admonitions, moral discourse, proverbs, and history; similarly, the Zabūr was a book of praise, prayers, and religious melodies. At the

time of Muhammad (ﷺ), there appear to be many noble Arabians who longed to have a scripture such as the Torah. And who knows, were the Arabians in earlier history to have been tasked with the Torah they may have displayed a sense of responsibility and devotion superceding the Children of Israel and their ill-tempered history with prophets and scripture. Before this *āyah* in which the Torah is alluded to, there was an inference to the Qur'an, **“And that this is My way, a straightforward way, so follow through...”** (6:153) and this is immediately followed by, **“We vouchsafed the divine Writ unto Moses...”** As noted the Torah and the Qur'an are coupled in a number of *āyāt* throughout this all-embracing Qur'an,

...a promise that in truth He has willed upon Himself in [the words of] the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an... (9:111).

And yet, before this there was the revelation of Moses, a guide and a [sign of Allah's] grace; and this [Qur'an] is a divine writ confirming the truth [of the Torah] in the Arabic tongue... (46:12);

The ten sanctions or commandments that were mentioned in the three *āyāt* above (6:151–153) are mirrored by another set of ten sanctions or commandments in *Sūrah al-Isrā'*. These appear to be a common denominator among the Messengers of Allah (ﷺ),

In matters of *dīn*, He has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Noah — and into which We gave you [O Muhammad] insight through revelation — as well as that which We had enjoined upon Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus: steadfastly uphold the [true] *dīn*, and do not break up your unity therein (42:13).

No Excuses for God-Denial after Revelation of the Qur'an

Thereafter, We granted the divine Writ unto Moses in full measure upon those who sought perfection, clearly spelling out everything, and [thus providing] guidance and grace, so that they might have faith in the [final] meeting with their Sustainer (6:154).

The Torah is almost synonymous with Jewish law, most narrowly considered the Priestly code found in the Pentateuch and believed to be the book God revealed to Moses (ﷻ).⁷³⁵ The term was also often applied to the Pentateuch as a whole; and as the importance of the prophets and writings grew, it was sometimes used to describe them all as divinely revealed instructions and traditions. This written Torah was eventually supplemented in Pharisaic and rabbinic tradition by the Oral Torah, not a fixed revelation but an elucidation and application of the written Torah by sages of various periods. The Torah in its original wording was tremendous: in the words of the Qur'an, **"...clearly detailing everything..."**

The Yahūd of today, had they not fooled around with the original divine Writ, would have been on a par with the Muslims. But to their loss, they frittered and frivoled away the original Torah that was once in their possession. What a loss! Complicating this loss more is the Yahūdī unwillingness to come clean and endorse the authenticity and undisputed credibility of the Qur'an. Yahūdī racism stands as a barrier between them and the truth, between them and God, and between them and a potential neighborhood of soon-to-be consolidated and committed Muslims. If the Yahūd were in possession of their mental faculties, they would see that the Qur'an and the Torah come from the same source and are similarly encouraging conformity to the same authority of God, minus of course the age-old scourge of Zionist racism. Whether or not the Yahūd of today want to see the light of day is their choice. But this Qur'an and its adherents will carry on with their covenant responsibilities to Allah (ﷻ). This all-out effort will give birth to the new tomorrow of Allah's moral, social, and inclusive rescript,

And this, too, is a divine Writ that We have conferred from on high, a hallowed one: follow it, then, and be aware [of Allah's power], so that you might be graced with His mercy (6:155).

Before the inception of the Qur'anic revelation, there may have been those Arabians who were unhappy with the fact that they were never selected to receive a divine writ. They were intimating that had they been favored with scripture, they would have been much more faithful than the Yahūd. But then, these Arabians, too, received a book from heaven, and thus they were disarmed of all their expressions of resentment. However, they were also made to understand that henceforth, all deniers and objectors will merit severe and unrelenting punishment,

[It — the Qur'an — has been given to you] lest you say, "Only upon two groups of people [Jews and Christians], [both of them] before our time, has a divine writ been imparted from on high — and we were indeed unaware of their teachings. Or lest you say, "If a divine writ had been bestowed from on high upon us, we would surely have followed its guidance better than they did." And so, a clear evidence of the truth has now come to you from your Sustainer, and guidance, and grace. Who, then, could be more offensive than he who gives the lie to Allah's messages [of power presence], and turns away from them in disdain? We shall requite those who turn away from our [power] messages in disdain with terrible suffering for having thus turned away! (6:156–157).

With the advent of the Qur'an, no one can be excused for claiming never to have received revelation. Nonetheless, even after the Qur'an was revealed to them through one of their own, the Arabians put up a struggle and prosecuted wars to maintain their denial of Allah's authority. They wanted to persevere with

their *shirk* status quo, feeling comfortable with churning out their own laws that they attributed to God's wishes. But with their challenge now resolved, and the open Qur'an now in front of them, giving them unlimited access to divine words and prescripts, they quickly discovered there was nothing in it that corroborated their declarations or endorsed their disputations. But their objections did not end there: they had an unending appetite for miracles. They wanted supernatural things to happen so that they could have confidence in the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ); and even that psychology was preempted by the following *āyah*,

Do they, perchance, wait for the angels to appear before them, or for your Sustainer [Himself] to appear, or for some of your Sustainer's [final] hints to appear? [But] on the Day when your Sustainer's [final] hints do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not commit [to Allah] earlier, or who, while having done so, did no good works. Say, "Wait, [then, for the Last Day, O deniers of Allah's power]; behold, we [the committed Muslims] are waiting, too!" (6:158).

Note how gentle the Qur'an is to the feelings of those who are consumed by their self-centeredness. Here, even though the Prophet and committed Muslims with him know they are the extension of Mūsá (ﷺ) and the Torah, they do not try to "monopolize" revelation,

And then, We vouchsafed the divine Writ unto Moses, in full measure upon those who persevered in [seeking] perfection, as a detail of everything [of significance], and [thus providing] guidance and grace, so that they might have faith in the [final] confluence with their Sustainer (6:154).

This *āyah* is sympathetically rallying the Children of Israel, who should know better. For all practical purposes, according to these

remarkable divine words, nothing was left out of the Torah, especially as some of its adherents were looking for the ultimate salvation, peace, and communion with their Lord. In the Torah there was an extended treatment of the particulars of what is moral or immoral, what is permissible or forbidden, what is legal or illegal, etc. The Torah, in its original word form, was providing direction and giving advice about the right course of action.

And so it came to be for the Arabians and all others in the range of Qur'anic influence and inspiration, who were (are) to take note that they, too, were (are) expected to seek moral refinement and social discernment, as they gravitate toward the One and Only, **“And this is a scripture that We have bestowed with blessings; so follow it, and be alert [concerning Allah’s power] so that you may be graced.”**

This Book (the Qur'an) is a blessing, a benediction, and a boon. It contains all the information social beings need. But it could not be all that were it not for people culturing their minds and hearts to it. Had this Book been given to sub-humans, it would have no value for them. Had it been given to non-communicative beings, creatures who cannot think or reason, it would have no celebrated status. However, once this Book is absorbed by the heart and assimilated by the mind it becomes the most valuable thing any thinking and passionate human being can possess. About this, there can be no doubt. With this blessed Book in the social milieu, there can be no recourse to try capitalist mechanisms, or to react with socialist theories, or to justify identity by racist ideologies. Can we not listen with unobstructed minds to the contents and composition of this holy Qur'an?

Before the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ), history unfolded with Allah (ﷻ) sending prophets and apostles to their respective societies. The language of communication was the one peculiar to that particular society or community. But with the commencement of this Qur'an and the advent of this Prophet, committing to the enduring message and realizing the perennial mission became the responsibility of all peoples regardless of their ethnicity, language, or racial features. Muhammad (ﷺ) was and is the messenger for all hu-

manity, surpassing the barriers of race, national origin, sex, class status, and language.

As for the Arabians, they, too, no longer have any excuses. They cannot say they did not receive scripture or have a prophet. The information on which to base a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and to organize life on earth is as clear as it gets in this sparkling Scripture. And the Prophet (ﷺ) is as inviting and inclusive as prophets come; rather more so because he was consciously aware of the fact that unlike his predecessor prophet peers, who were sent to their unique societies and cultures, he was commissioned to speak to humanity in a way accommodative of anyone willing to conform to Allah’s authority, accept His decree, and do His will. Those who limp away from this direction are truly lost. They are lost in their own selves, in the society around them, in the world at large, in their lifetime, and in their progressing into the coming life, **“We will punish those who limp away from Our āyāt with ominous affliction due to their lame course.”**

Having no avail from all their other arguments and contentions, such people begin to demand that their prophets produce miracles. As discussed earlier, the paradigm shift of Islam and the Qur’an moves away from physical miracles. The Qur’an brought an end to that age, and moving forward, commitment to Allah (ﷻ) would require a mental relationship of understanding, reasoning, and thinking. It is an expression of Allah’s mercy that He did not accede to their demands, for were He to present them with the type of miracles they were insisting on, and then they nevertheless turned their backs on Him, then He would have to immediately and permanently exterminate them — not because He relishes punishment, but because their transgressions against His counsel, and thereby the rights of man, demand their termination. Now, however, with the Qur’anic dynamic becoming the standard, the criterion of God-consciousness would be the covenant with Allah (ﷻ) and the hard work needed to fulfill it. This is what will count in the final reckoning.

Forsaking God's Authority Is What Leads to Division

The ensuing segment of information discloses that the Prophet (ﷺ) is notable and special in that his *dīn*, *sharī'ah*, and *Sirah* have not been undermined by factional discord. All other religions, ideologies, and methodologies have been divided into scores of denominations and even shredded into hundreds of versions. This would include the ancient *mushriks* as well as the *neo-mushriks*,

Verily, as for those who have broken the unity of their *dīn* and have become dissenting cliques, you have nothing to do with them. Behold, their case rests with Allah; and in time He will make them understand what they were doing (6:159).

The old-hand *mushriks* were demoralized by the illusions of their *jāhiliyah*, by the influence of its established but tense norms, and by their settling into conflicting claims of rivalry. The culture of *jāhiliyah*, then as today, consists of partisan politics, competing tribalism (nationalism), and marauding clans (warring militaries) — all lacking any common purpose and semblance of unity. The ancient Arabian divisiveness is also applicable to “Jews” and “Christians” who were and have been fractioned into sects, denominations, religions, ideologies, nation-states, camps, and blocs — all of whom are hostile and irreconcilable with each other. This scenario of division, contention, and discord remains in effect and will be true of ungodly societies until the end of time.

Allah's words set His final Messenger apart, as he does not belong to this mental confusion, social disintegration, and political strife. The *dīn* of Muhammad (ﷺ) is Islam, his moral legal order is the *Shari'ah*, and his *Sirah* neither borrows features from the *jāhiliyah* nor is influenced by it. This Prophet and *dīn* do not appropriate ideas and ideologies from materialists, secularists, or God-deniers. This *dīn* of Islam is not a hodgepodge of other religions, ideologies, or theories; it is not in need of philosophical or ideological arguments to substantiate its meaning or make it popular. Islam is Islam. Islamic morality is Islamic morality. Islamic

law is Islamic law. The social, economic, and political organizations and institutions of Islam are Islamic and not capitalist, socialist, or whatever happens to be in vogue during a *jāhili* era. And Allah’s Messenger is not a party to all the irreconcilable ideologies, schismatic sects, or quarrelsome factions that have characterized the world of *shirk* and *kufr*.

A Muslim who understands Islam unhesitatingly knows in his heart and confidently feels in his mind that he does not belong by his very nature to whatever other man-made authority and way of life that is not Islam. A Muslim realizes that the recalcitrant *jāhiliyāh* has its own gods — temporal authorities and deities. A *jāhiliyāh* cannot assert Allah (ﷻ) as its God when there are other gods pirating society into their dominance and dominion. A Muslim is not some schizophrenic character who has one foot firmly established in *jāhiliyāh* and the other foot in Islam. Only a clown can attempt such buffoonery. It should be as clear as day is from night that Islam is independent, unique, and an integral whole as was the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ).

As for those who try to do away with this feature of a united and uniting Islam, the Prophet (ﷺ) is in the clear and beyond doubt. These enlightening words invoke pity for those Muslims today who feel they need to compensate for their Islam by latching on to other philosophies of religion or politics of ideologies. From the start, everyone should know that Islam does not tolerate the factionalism that comes from compartmentalizing and fragmenting Islam until it loses its cumulative and cohesive constitution. Those who deteriorate into the abyss of an “Islam of factions” will have to answer for their divisive behavior, but in the interim, neither the Prophet nor the committed Muslims are party to any schismatic alienation.

The results of such factionalism are referred to Allah (ﷻ), **“Behold, their case rests with Allah; and in time He will make them understand what they were doing.”** Resting the case with Allah does not mean that “unity Muslims” give up on their responsibilities of being the “adhesive members” of the Ummah. They have to press on with their duties, and as they do, Allah will bring out the true nature and character of the separatists.

Of central significance here is that disunity and fragmentation are discussed after an extended concentration on the issue of “authority.” Researching the human experience demonstrates that the larger populations, the cosmopolitan societies, the vast countries and conglomerates of peoples began to disintegrate as a consequence of their losing sight of Allah’s authority. Those who call themselves Christians are the most severely divided people on earth. That is because they were, for many centuries on end, unrivaled in de-authorizing God. The appearance of a “unity” of sorts among them — in the form of the “European Union” that is trumped up widely nowadays — is nothing but a political facade. The religious, political, cultural, linguistic, and economic divisions and disparities are so wide and so deep at the popular level that the use of the word *unity* is preposterous. Those who call themselves “Jews” are also deeply and profoundly divided; and this, too, can be traced to their stubborn attitude *vis-à-vis* God’s authority. They defied Him so seriously that He condemned them to the current diaspora they are in. Even their assemblage into the nation-state of Israel amounts to a “concentration” of that diaspora where divisions run as deep as is possible in human nature — for instance, between “Reform Jews” and “Orthodox Jews,” between Jews of European origin (Ashkenazi) and Jews of Muslim Eastern origin (Mizrahi), and between the “atheist Jews” of the West and the “Falasha or African Jews” of the East. Absent God’s authority, Jews and Christians are being decimated by racism, nationalism, and class polarization; even gender politics have taken their toll on such runaways and turncoats when it comes to the authority of God.

Where are the Muslims in this equation? They, too, are human beings, and they, too, are subject to the same social laws as everyone else if they forsake Allah’s (ﷻ) authority. With this *āyah*, “**Verily, those who have broken the unity of their *dīn*...**” as the reference point, below is a quick synopsis of what has been said aforetime about the lack of unity among the Muslims. Those who break the unity of this *dīn*, it is said, are the people of *bid’ah* and *shubuhāt* (religious extemporizations and ambiguities), the people of *dalālāh* (waywardness). Giving a specific interpretation of the words

“...and have become sects,” some say that this is in reference to the Khawārij.⁷³⁶ Those harboring the above opinions have said that outside the realm of Islam, this *āyah* may be referring to the “Jews” and “Christians” as they uncoupled or forced apart the *dīn* of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (ﷺ). When looking at the messages of these three prophets through Judeo-Christian eyes, it appears that all three had separate and segregated religions, within each of which are disconnected sects and unrelated religious orders. It has also been said that this *āyah* is general and inclusive of all the *kāfirs*. Its meaning, thus, engulfs anyone who departs or diverges from this *dīn* in significant ways.⁷³⁷

There are those who had an open mind, seeing that the meaning of this *āyah* is applicable to anyone falling within its range of meaning, be he a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, or anyone else.⁷³⁸ This *āyah* could very well be directed at Muslims, because there is another *āyah* that says as much in a direct and frank manner,

And [you, O Muslims] be not like those who have drawn apart from one another and have taken to conflicting views after all evidence of the truth has come to them; these are the ones for whom tremendous suffering is in store on the Day [of Judgement] (3:105).

One meaning of *farraqū dīnahum* (they split their *dīn*) is that they adhered to some portions of the holy Writ while neglecting others. Another tract in this holy Writ, in reference to the people of previous scripture, says, “**Do you commit yourselves to some of the Book, and deny some?**” (2:85). They would also twist some meanings to suit their interests or egos. Doing these things caused them to drift apart, each group feeling convinced of its own position to the degree of fanaticism or chauvinism. These types need not be confronted with warfare as a first option; what is required at the beginning is to sort out their attitude by explaining to them what the true meaning of *dīn* is. The Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims have nothing to do with their misappropriation and misapplication of Islam — in ancient history and in current times.

These “Muslims” disposed to open fragmentation will come to realize what they have been doing either later on in life, or early on in the afterlife. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī said that the intent of the *āyah* was for Muslims to be keen on unity, and not to be divided because of “interpretations” and improvisations.⁷³⁹

Though it is uncomfortable to bring up this issue, the despicable condition of today’s Muslims provides no cogent alternatives. A “hadith” that is quoted off and on is supposed to be pertinent to the unity of the Muslims,

*Be it known that people of previous scripture were divided into seventy-two sects, and verily, this Ummah is going to be divided into seventy-three sects — seventy-two [of them] are in the Fire and one is in Paradise, and that one is the jamā‘ah.*⁷⁴⁰

In another version of this “hadith,” the wording is,

*The Jews were divided into seventy-one or seventy-two factions and likewise with the Christians; and my Ummah is going to be divided into seventy-three factions.*⁷⁴¹

The meaning here is that the Jews and Christians were divided into 71 or 72 sects or factions, respectively, and that “my Ummah” will be divided into 73, all of whom are in the Fire except for one, which is in Paradise, and that one is the *jamā‘ah* (those who consider themselves mainstream Muslims).

This type of “hadith” provides a good example of how a purported hadith cannot “fit” into the discourse of the Qur’an. In the first instance, if 71 or 72 were meant to refer to an exact number of sects or denominations within Christianity or Judaism, then this conflicts with reality for there are much more than that; over the course of time they are in the hundreds at least. If the numbers 71 and 72 are supposed to mean a multitude of divisions, then in the Arabic language, these particular numbers are not known to indicate a multiplicity; in fact, the numbers employed to do that are 40, 70, or 100. So in delivering the general meaning here, a

linguistic failure comes to light. The *āyah* specifically mentions the words *farraqū dīnahum* while in these assumed hadiths, the operative words are *millah*, *ummaḥ*, and *jamā'ah*. Serious incompatibilities such as these offer up no explanation other than the fact that this so-called hadith(s) is a forgery. Besides, in the humble judgement of this writer, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, who is one of the key narrators of this “hadith,” carries no credibility.⁷⁴²

Another anomaly is that the Prophet (ﷺ) in this alleged hadith is predicting that his Ummah will become worse than the Jews and the Christians. Even with all the problems the Muslims are having, they have not mutilated Islam in the same way the Jews and Christians disfigured Judaism and Christianity. Judaism and Christianity no longer exist in either theory or practice. While the Muslims still have a theoretical Islam that is intact and pure, they are running critically short on a practical and functional Islam. So, the Muslims, despite their mistakes, deficiencies, and errors, have not turned out to be worse than the Jews and Christians on the matter of solidarity.

Whoever shall come [before Allah] with a good deed will gain ten times the like thereof; but whoever shall come with an evil deed will be requited with no more than the like thereof; and none shall be treated unjustly (6:160).

This *āyah* puts an end to those who scheme divisions along theoretical and argumentative lines. What unites or divides is man's work and labor. And this should be the Muslims' main concern as they put into practice their covenant with the Most High. It is what people do that carries the day. And if what the Muslims do has a lasting impact for good, then their rewards are multiplied tenfold; conversely, if what they do is unsound, disobedient, and divisive, then they will face its equivalent consequences.

No Possibility of an Authority That Is Not Allah (ﷻ)

Finally, at the end of this discourse, there are the touching words,

Say, “Behold, my Sustainer has guided me onto a straight way through an integral *dīn* — the worldview of Abraham, who maintained his self-reliance, and was not of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Him (6:161).

The world of temporal authority can become confusing and perplexing. There are options here and alternatives there. There are appealing theories from the right and counter-appealing ones from the left. There are “things that make sense” but then after a while they seem *pas*, outdated, or ineffectual. There are moving speeches and elaborate programs from charismatic speakers and from charming nominees for political offices. There seem to be too many things going on and too many people involved to think of an “authority” that is God’s. And within this morass, how comforting and reassuring it is to hear and repeat, “Behold, My Sustainer has guided me on a straight path through an ever-true *dīn*...”; and how encouraging it is to trace one’s effort and character to Ibrāhīm (ﷻ); and how uplifting it is to be able to integrate all of human history without the man-induced divisions and the hostilities that are built therein.

The “straight way” here is the *ṣirāṭ mustaqīm*, which the Muslims invoke in their *ṣalāḥs* throughout the day, “*Ihdirā al-ṣirāṭa al-mustaqīm: Guide us to the straight path*” (1:6). A committed Muslim feels strongly attached to Ibrāhīm (ﷻ) as he reads and thinks through this Book,

And who, unless he be weak of mind, would want to abandon Ibrāhīm’s *millaḥ*... (2:130);

And who could be better in terms of *dīn* than he who surrenders his whole being to Allah and is a doer of good withal, and follows the *millaḥ* of Ibrāhīm, who

turned away from all that is false — seeing that Allah exalted Ibrāhīm with His love? (4:125);

Verily, Ibrāhīm was a man who combined within himself all virtues, devoutly obeying Allah’s will, turning away from all that is false, and not being of those who ascribe divinity/authority to any beside Allah: [for he was always] grateful for the blessings granted by Him who had elected him and guided him to a straight way. And so We vouchsafed him good in this world; and, verily, in the life to come [too] he shall find himself among the righteous (16:120–122).

The individualization, nationalization, and racialization of Judaism and Christianity has crippled and slashed their togetherness, so much so that they have no credibility when they claim Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) as one of their own, “**Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor a Christian, rather he was an undiluted *muslim* and was not of the *mushriks*” (3:67). A *muslim* is one who yields to Allah (ﷻ), in contradistinction to those who “run over His authority” or “railroad it.”**

Say, “Behold, my *ṣalāh*, and [all] my acts of devotion, and my living and my dying are for Allah [alone], the Sustainer of all the worlds, in whose divinity/authority none has a share: for thus have I been bidden — and I shall [always] be foremost among those who surrender themselves to Him” (6:162–163).

These are the words of a person who dedicates his conscious moments of existence to Allah (ﷻ). Everything from moments of daily communion in a social reality that belongs to Allah, to conscientious acts and works in everyday life bound up with Allah, to the stretch of a lifetime that is pledged to Allah, to the final moment of passing on — all this — is intentionally, deliberately, and purposely relinquished and granted to Allah, the Sustainer and the Lord.

Say, “Am I, then, to seek a sustainer other than Allah, when He is the Sustainer of all things?” And whatever wrong any human being commits rests upon himself alone; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another’s burden. And, in time, unto your Sustainer you all must return: and then He will make you [indeed] understand all that on which you were wont to differ (6:164).

How can any man refer his life to earthly authorities, worldly powers, or mortal mighties? They have no sustaining power. They cannot even sustain themselves, when it comes down to the elementary basics. There is no one to seek except He who created and sustains all this and then will bring it all to a climax.

“Am I to try to obtain someone besides Allah as a sustainer, when He is the Sustainer of all?” If He is the sought-for Sustainer, then He is the authority, the One who regulates life, and guides. Responsibility is defined by His eternal wisdom and judgement. He sustains the world, the universe, and existence. So where else can anyone go looking for direction and salvation? Nothing happens in a vacuum. Therefore, man’s labor, work, and deeds are also not in a vacuum. They will be assessed and rewarded by Allah (ﷻ). Differences and disputes in this world need a final judge. And He is the only One who can justly and mercifully dispense final judgement.

Is it possible for us human beings to look for a “lord” or “sustainer” besides Allah (ﷻ) when He is the One who calibrated physical and social life to be within its humanly identifiable range? We have taken charge of the affairs of this world as intelligent beings — but are we capable on our own, without His “input,” to move our lives in the right direction? Are we qualified to have a “final say” on vital issues in disregard to what He says? Is our leading role in resolving our social problems a role that can thrive and flourish as we disregard His word and authority? Are we even capable of changing the variances and divergences that come with our physical and mental stations in life? And with all these variances, do we complement each other or do we conflict? If it is the

former, who said so and on what authority? And if it is the latter, still, who said so and on what authority?

Do we still have enough of our God-given human nature to understand that what is good has to be rewarded and what is bad has to be punished in accordance with a measure of justice that never fails? And if so, who can provide that unfailing measure and degree of justice as the case may merit? Anyone who answers that a government or court, a community or sage are able to do this is bitterly misinformed. Governments and sages are contributing factors to the maturation of Allah's revealed tidings and expressed Scripture. But they can never be substitutes, or even partial substitutes, for the point of reference, the Book of facts, and the certification that is Allah (ﷻ), His Scripture, and His Prophet (ﷺ).

For, He it is who has made you inherit the earth, and has raised some of you by degrees above others, so that He might try you by means of what He has bestowed upon you. Verily, your Sustainer is swift in retribution: yet, behold, He is indeed much-forgiving, properly merciful (6:165).

Mankind is a sequence of responsibilities passed on from generation to generation. It is composed of varying degrees of aptitudes, potentials, and capacities. This was not meant for exploitation, as exploitation is a violation of justice, but for cooperation and complementation, which fulfill the imperative of justice. Mankind cannot escape the consequences of its deeds — its moral or immoral performance.

As we weak humans are driven by ambition, the strongest of these age-long ambitions is the one certain that God's will shall be done on earth. And in the process, with our sights set and our penchant toward Allah (ﷻ), we know we will be making mistakes — to err is human. But we also know, along this course of worldly action into the life to come, that Allah's mercy overrides any other considerations. The Prophet (ﷺ) is known to have said in an oft-quoted hadith, *“When Allah created creation, He wrote a statement*

that He placed over His seat of power, 'Verily, My mercy surmounts My wrath.'"⁷⁴³ ■

Endnotes

273 Narrated by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by al-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim.

274 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār)*, Volume 7. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma'rifaḥ, 1414AH), p. 373 (originally narrated by Bishr ibn al-Mubashshir al-Wāsiṭī who told it to Abū Yazīd al-Madanī).

275 Narrated by Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Quraḏī who told it to Yazīd ibn Ziyād, and recorded by Ibn Ishāq.

حدث أن عتبة بن ربيعة — وكان سيديا — قال يوما وهو جالس في نادي قريش . ورسول الله ﷺ جالس في المسجد وحده "يا معشر قريش . ألا أقوم إلى محمد فأكلمه وأعرض عليه أمورا لعله أن يقبل بعضها . فنعطيها أيها شاء ويكف عنا؟" وذلك حين أسلم حمزة . وراؤا أصحاب رسول الله ﷺ يزيدون ويكثرئون فقالوا "بلى يا أبا الوليد فقم إليه فكلمه" فقام إليه عتبة حتى جلس إلى رسول الله ﷺ فقال "يا ابن أخي . إنك منا حيث علمت من البسطة في العشيرة . والمكان في النسب . وإنك قد أتيت قومك بأمر عظيم . فرقت به جماعتهم . وسفوت أحلامهم . وعبت به ألهتهم ودينهم . وكفرت به من مضى من آباؤهم . فاسمع مني أعرض عليك أمورا تنظر فيها . لعلك تقبل منها بعضها."

فقال له رسول الله ﷺ "قل يا أبا الوليد أسمع." قال "يا ابن أخي . إن كنت إنما تريد بما جئت به من هذا الأمر مالا جمعنا لك من أموالنا حتى تكون أكثرنا مالا . وإن كنت تريد به شرفا سودناك علينا حتى لا تقطع امرنا دونك . وإن كنت تريد به ملكا ملكناك علينا . وإن كان هذا الذي يأتيك رثيا تراه لا تستطيع رده عن نفسك طلبنا لك الأطباء . وبدلنا فيها أموالنا حتى نبرئك منه . فإنه ربما غلب التابع على الرجل حتى يداوى منه" (أو كما قال) حتى إذا فرغ عتبة . ورسول الله ﷺ يستمع منه . قال "أفرضت يا أبا الوليد؟" قال "نعم." قال "فاسمع مني." قال "أفعل." قال "بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم . حم . تنزيل من الرحمن الرحيم . كتاب فصلت آياته قرآنا عربيا لقوم يعلمون . بشيرا ونذيرا فأعرض أكثرهم فهم لا يسمعون..." (١٠٧: ٤١) . ثم مضى رسول الله ﷺ فيها وهو يقرؤها عليه . فلما سمع عتبة أنصت لها . وألقى يديه خلف ظهره . معتمدا عليهما . يستمع منه . حتى انتهى رسول الله ﷺ إلى السجدة منها فسجد . ثم قال "قد سمعت يا أبا الوليد ما سمعت . فأنت وذاك"

فقام عتبة إلى أصحابه . فقال بعضهم لبعض "نحلف بالله لقد جاءكم أبو الوليد بغير الوجه الذي ذهب به!" فلما جلس إليهم قالوا "ما وراك يا أبا الوليد؟" قال "ورائي أني سمعت قولاً والله ما سمعت مثله قط . والله ما هو بالسحر . ولا بالشعر . ولا بالكهانة . يا معشر قريش أطيعوني واجعلوها لي... خلوا بين الرجل وما هو فيه . فاعتزلوه . فوالله ليكونن لقوله الذي سمعت نياً . فإن تصبه العرب كفتيموه بغيركم . وإن يظهر على العرب فملكه ملككم . وعزه عزكم . وكنتم أسعد الناس به..." قالوا "سحرك والله يا أبا الوليد بلسانه!" قال "هذا رأيي فاصنعوا ما بدا لكم!"

Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (circa 54BH–3AH) – an uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ), an early adherent to Islam, and one of its more ardent champions in the battlefield. He had been a hunter and was a man of prowess. He was killed during the Battle of Uḥud by the lance of a slave called Waḥshī, who had been promised a rich reward for the life of Ḥamzah by Hind, the wife of Abū

Sufyān, himself the leader of the Makkan opposition. The Prophet (ﷺ) mourned his death with particular sadness.

276 The five prophets who comprise *ulū al-‘aẓm min al-rusul* include Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsá (Moses), ‘Īsá (Jesus), and Muhammad (ﷺ).

277 **Joshua** (circa Late Bronze Age, 13th–15th century BCE) – in Hebrew, he is called **Yehoshua**. In the current reading and understanding of the Old Testament by today’s “Jews” and “Christians,” he was the son of Nun, from the tribe of Ephraim. During the 40 years’ wanderings of the Israelis, he acted as a “minister” of Moses (ﷺ), and upon Moses’ death was appointed to lead the people into Canaan. The Book of Joshua is named after him.

Elijah (circa mid-9th century BCE) – in the Western version of the Old Testament, a Hebrew prophet during the reigns of the Israeli kings Ahab and Ahaziah. He is said to have come from Gilead, referring in the Hebrew Bible to two places east of the Jordan River. He defeated the prophets of Baal, and was said to have been carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot in a whirlwind. In Jewish belief, Elijah will return to Earth to herald the coming of the Messiah.

Elisha (circa mid-9th century BCE) – in the modern reading of the Old Testament, a Hebrew prophet, successor to Elijah.

278 In regard to a people being destroyed for their unflagging rejection of divine guidance after their prophet had performed miracles, how is this to be reconciled with the fact that Jesus (ﷺ) performed many miracles but the society he was in was not wiped out? The first thing to consider here is that the followers of Jesus did not pester him to produce miracles as a proof of his prophethood — except for the tablespread from heaven, which they asked for meekly in the manner of Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), as a matter of passion and desire for commitment, and not defiance. Compare the Qur’anic renditions of both events and note the similarities,

And, lo, Ibrāhīm said, “O my Sustainer! Show me how You give life to the dead!” Said He, “Have you, then, no trust [in Me]?” Ibrāhīm answered, “Yes, but [let me see it] so that my heart may be at ease.” Said He, “Take, then, four birds and teach them to obey you; then place them separately on every hill [around you]; then summon them: they will come airborne to you. And know that Allah is Almighty, Wise” (2:260);

And [remember the time] when I inspired the white-garbed ones, “Commit to Me and My apostle!” They answered, “We commit; and bear You witness that we have surrendered ourselves [unto You].” [And], lo, the white-garbed ones said, “O Jesus, son of Mary! Could your Sustainer send down unto us a repast from heaven?” [Jesus] answered, “Be conscious of Allah [His power presence], if you are [truly] committed [to Him]!” Said they, “We desire to partake thereof, so that our hearts might be set fully at rest, and that we might know you have spoken the truth to us, and that we might be of those who bear witness thereto!” Said Jesus, the son of Mary, “O Allah, our Sustainer! Send down upon us a repast from heaven: it shall be an ever-recurring feast for us — for the first and the last of us — and a sign from You. And provide us our sustenance, for You are the best of providers!” Allah answered, “Verily, I [always] do send it down unto you: and so, if any of you should henceforth deny [this] truth, on him, behold, will I inflict suffering the like of which I have never [yet] inflicted upon anyone in the world!” (5:111–115).

However, even though the disciples of Jesus were given what they requested, they still had to be cognizant of the divine warning that all previous peoples were given.

The second thing to note here is that when Jesus (ﷺ) spoke in the cradle to exonerate his mother from the calumnious accusations of Banū Isrā’īl, this miracle was for the benefit of the recalcitrant Israelis, and not the disciples of Jesus, who did not exist at the time. And so it was with all the other miracles he performed; they were meant as a mercy for Banū Isrā’īl — the ones who had a long history of defying prophets, even killing the ones they could, and rejecting scripture. Their thoroughgoing attitude of badgering, bedeviling, and tormenting their prophets coupled with the racism and exclusivism that ensue from such a nasty disposition are what brought upon them the condemnation and punishment from God, causing them to endure estrangement and diaspora on earth. And even when their prophets relented and produced miracle upon miracle, their arrogance was not tempered and still they rejected the messengers and messages from heaven. The Makkan *mushriks* did not just pick up this attitude of rejection coupled with derision out of the blue, especially since they regarded themselves to be second fiddle to the Israelis of Madinah. They were mouthing the same, centuries-old spin used by Banū Isrā’īl against the scores of prophets sent to them.

The Israelis were opposed to Jesus (ﷺ) from the very beginning of his mission and it might have been their residual influence on the Disciples that caused them to ask for the tablespread. Finally, in the Qur’an, it is telling that unlike all the other prophets mentioned, Jesus is the only one who

never said, “*Yā qawmī*: O my people” to those he was inviting (rescuing). Instead, he always addressed them with “*Yā Banī Isrā’īl*: O Children of Israel.” The precision of Allah’s (ﷻ) words reflects the unbridgeable distance between Jesus and the people he grew up with. He could not in good conscience characterize them as “his people,” and hence all the death and destruction that accrued to the truculent attitude of Banū Isrā’īl would not necessarily apply to the intimates of Jesus.

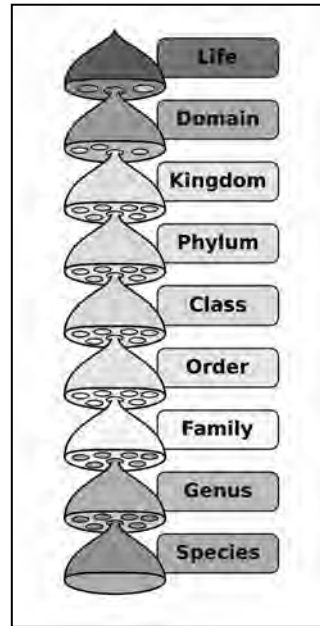
279 Organisms are classified into a hierarchical series of groups that emphasizes their presumed evolutionary interrelationships. The main categories of modern systematic classifications are (in order of increasing generality) *species*, *genus*, *family*, *order*, *class*, *phylum* (*animals*), *division* (*plants*), and *kingdom*.

Genus is a category in biological classification consisting of one or more closely related and morphologically similar species. The name of the genus (for example, *Panthera*) and the species (for example, *leo*) together form the scientific name of an organism (for example, the lion is classified as *Panthera leo*).

Family in biological classification is a group of related genera (plural of genus). Family names are not printed in italic (unlike genus and species names), and by convention they all have the ending *-idae* (*animals*) or *-aceae* (*plants and fungi*). For example, the genera of hummingbirds are grouped in the hummingbird family, Trochilidae. Related families are grouped together in an order.

Order in biological classification is a group of related families. For example, the horse, rhinoceros, and tapir families are grouped in the order Perissodactyla, the odd-toed ungulates, because they all have either one or three toes on each foot. The names of orders are not shown in italic (unlike genus and species names) and by convention they have the ending *-formes* (*birds and fish*), *-a* (*mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and other animals*), and *-ales* (*fungi and plants*). Related orders are grouped in a class.

Class in biological classification is a group of related orders. For example, all mammals belong to the class Mammalia and all birds to the class Aves. Thus, the class Angiospermae (flowering plants) includes numerous plant orders such as Rosales (currants, acacias, roses, and others). The class Reptilia (reptiles) includes the orders Crocodilia and Chelonia (turtles) among others.



Phylum in animal classification is one of the major groupings forming the principal category below kingdom, and comprising classes and lower categories. Phyla represent the major types of animals, with each having its own basic structural plan that is clearly different from that of other phyla.

Kingdom in biology is the highest category into which organisms are classified. Traditionally two kingdoms have been recognized — Plantae (plants) and Animalia (animals) — but increasing knowledge of microorganisms has made it difficult to fit them into this system. Modern systems recognize five kingdoms: Protista (single-celled eucaryotes), Monera (prokaryotes), Fungi (eucaryotic fungi that lack flagella at all stages of their life-cycle), Plantae, and Animalia. A prokaryote is a microscopic single-celled organism that has neither a distinct nucleus with a membrane nor other specialized organelles, while a eukaryote is any organism whose cells have a nucleus and other organelles enclosed within membranes. The defining feature that sets eukaryotic cells apart from prokaryotic cells (bacteria and archaea) is that they have membrane-bound organelles, especially the nucleus, which contains the genetic material (DNA) and is enclosed by the nuclear envelope. Eucaryotes are generally considered to be inclusive of all living organisms other than bacteria.

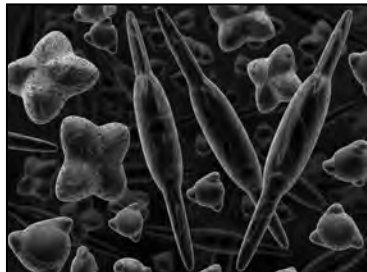
Taxonomy is the theory and practice of describing, naming, and classifying organisms. It is divided into:

1. *alpha taxonomy* — the description and designation of species typically on the basis of morphological characters;
2. *beta taxonomy* — the arrangement of species into hierarchical systems or higher categories; and
3. *gamma taxonomy* — the study of the evolutionary relationships between groups (taxa) and of variation within and between populations.

280 Bill MacKeith and Nicholas Harris (editors), *Future Earth: Exploring the Frontiers of Science*. (London, United Kingdom: Equinox (Oxford) Ltd., 1988), pp. 70–71.

281 Ibid.

phytoplankton or **plankton** — organisms without effective means of locomotion; drifters. They have been subdivided into plant (phytoplankton) and animal (zooplankton) types. Some plankton are capable of limited swimming ability, but cannot move faster than the ocean currents in which they may be carried, hence they cannot effectively swim.



Most plankton are microscopic in size. Some are the larval stages of organisms with larger, adult phases (meroplankton); examples include sea urchins, starfish, bivalves, and larval fish. Others remain planktonic for their entire life cycle (holoplankton); examples include copepods, arrow worms, and krill.

282 Bill MacKeith, *Future Earth*, pp. 70–71.

283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.

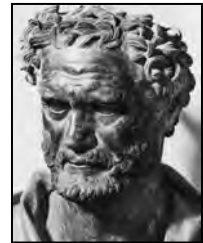
Gaia hypothesis – first proposed by James Lovelock in 1972, it considers the earth to be an intimately linked system of physical, chemical, and biological processes, interacting in a self-regulating way to maintain the conditions necessary for life. This contrasts with the view that the earth is merely an inanimate habitat, fortuitously having surface conditions that have supported the evolution of plants and animals. Although named after the Greek earth goddess, it has a scientific rather than mystical basis.

285 Yusuf Dhia-Allah, ‘Bani Saud-Bani Israel alliance out in the open’, *Crescent International* 45(3) (May 2016), pp. 9–11.

286 Willam H. Gentz (editor), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*. (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: The Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 85.

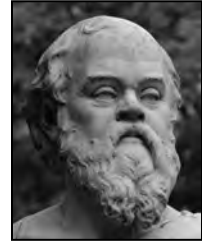
Leucippus (5th century BCE) – Greek philosopher, probably born in Miletus or Elea; little is known about his life. He was the originator of the atomistic cosmology that Democritus later developed, and that is most fully expounded in Lucretius’ poem *De rerum natura*.

Democritus (circa 460–370 BCE) – Greek philosopher, born in Abdera, Thrace. He had encyclopedic interests and wrote many works on physics, mathematics, ethics, and music, but only fragments of these survive. He is best known for his atomic theory, which he derived from Leucippus, and which was later popularized by Epicurus and Lucretius. He was the subject of Karl Marx’s PhD thesis. Refer also to Endnote 36 in Volume 2.



Socrates (circa 469–399 BCE) – Greek philosopher and inventor of a new method of study in terms of proposition and argument, a procedure of hypothesis and deduction that now lies at the heart of the scientific method.

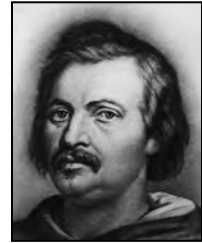
Socrates was inspired by a “divine mission” to teach men their own ignorance, but the method of question and answer, by which he deflated the self-opinionated and taught those who followed him to question established assumptions, made him many enemies. He was eventually condemned to death by poisoning with hemlock, a highly noxious European plant of the parsley family. Refer also to **Endnote 24** in Volume 4 and **Endnote 603** in Volume 8.



287 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 85.

288 Carol Dunlap, *The Culture Vulture: A Guide to Style, Period, and Ism*. (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1994), pp. 225–28.

Honore de Balzac (1799–1850) – French novelist of world stature and architect of the massive *Comedie Humaine*, which comprises over 50 volumes depicting every aspect of contemporary society, and an enormous range of human types. Despite obvious imperfections in style and technique, Balzac’s remarkable powers of observation enabled him to transpose the raw material from notebooks and memory into lasting fictional works. The portraits of his main protagonists are etched brilliantly and boldly — the miser Grandet, the naive Birotteau, Gobseck, cousin Pons, Vautrin, and the student Rastignac. Balzac’s lifelong struggle to keep his creditors at bay is reflected in his novels, whose themes are dominated by financial intrigue and the corrupting power of money, which he recognized as one of the dynamic forces in society.



Jules Michelet (1798–1874) – French nationalist historian, best remembered for his masterpiece *The Story of France* (*Histoire de France*, 1833–1867), comprising 19 volumes from the earliest account of the Franks and King Charlemagne to the outbreak of the February Revolution (1848). He was the first historian to coin the word *renaissance* (the French word for *rebirth*), to describe the cultural resurgence that occurred in Italy during the 15th century and which led to a new conception of mankind and its place in the world.



In the early-1840s, due to a few personal crises (the death of his first wife in 1839 and of his friend Madame Dumesnil in 1842), Michelet turned away from Christianity and began to profess a messianic belief in democratic

progress. His increasing hostility to the church, expressed in his lectures at the Collège de France, eventually brought him into conflict with the Jesuits and caused his lectures to be suspended in 1848. Soon thereafter, the revolution that he had heralded (the so-called February Revolution, which ended the Orleans monarchy, 1830–1848, and led to the creation of the French Second Republic) in *Le Peuple* (1846) seemed to bring about the realization of his dreams, but they were soon shattered; in 1852 Michelet, having refused allegiance to the Second Republic, was forced to surrender his posts. In 1847, he had interrupted the sequence of the *Histoire de France* to write the *Histoire de la révolution française*, seven volumes (1847–1853). He visualized the French Revolution (1789–1799) as a climax, as the triumph of *la Justice* over *la Grâce* — by which he meant both Christian dogma and the arbitrary power of the monarchy (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jules-Michelet>).

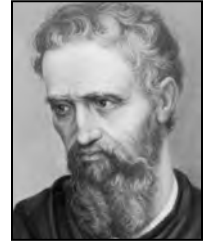
European Gothic period – architectural style in Europe that lasted from the mid-12th century to the 16th century, particularly a style of masonry building characterized by cavernous spaces with the expanse of walls broken up by overlaid tracery. In the 12th–13th centuries, feats of engineering permitted increasingly gigantic buildings. The rib vault, flying buttress, and pointed (Gothic) arch were used as solutions to the problem of building a very tall structure while preserving as much natural light as possible. Stained-glass window panels rendered startling sun-dappled interior effects. One of the earliest buildings to combine these elements into a coherent style was the abbey of Saint-Denis, Paris (circa 1135–1144). The High Gothic years (circa 1250–1300), heralded by Chartres Cathedral, were dominated by France, especially with the development of the Rayonnant style. Britain, Germany, and Spain produced variations of this style, while Italian Gothic stood apart in its use of brick and marble rather than stone. Late Gothic (15th century) architecture reached its height in Germany’s vaulted hall churches. Other Late Gothic styles include the British Perpendicular style and the French and Spanish Flamboyant style (source: <https://www.britannica.com/art/Gothic-architecture>).

289 Carol Dunlap, *The Culture Vulture*, pp. 225–28.

Giotto di Bondone (circa 1266–1337) – Florentine painter, sculptor, and architect.

Buonarroti Michelangelo (1475–1564) – Italian painter, architect, sculptor, and poet; one of the most important figures of the Renaissance. His most famous work is the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican (1508–1512), consisting mainly of a series of scenes from the Act of Creation to the

“Drunkenness” of Noah, divided by painted architecture and flanked by nude youths with prophets and sybils (oracular women believed to possess prophetic powers in ancient Greece). Together with Raphael’s tapestry designs for the Sistine Chapel, the ceiling’s exaltation of the beauty of the human figure in motion has probably had more influence than any other work of art in Europe. In 1536, Michelangelo began his epic *Last Judgement* on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel and later he painted the *Conversion of Saul* and the *Crucifixion of Peter* in the adjoining Capella Paolina (1542–1550). His sculptures include the *Fight Between the Lapiths and Centaurs*, *Bacchus* (1496), *Pieta* (1498) and the famous *David* (1504).



Petrarch (1304–1374) – Italian scholar and humanist, who was one of the great forerunners of the Italian Renaissance. His love poems to the unknown Laura have inspired imitators down the ages and rank among the greatest of all European love poems.

290 Carol Dunlap, *The Culture Vulture*, pp. 225–28.

291 Ibid.

292 Ibid.

Donato Di Niccolo Donatello (circa 1386–1466) – Florentine sculptor. His early Gothic style reflects the influences of Ghiberti, Michelozzo, and Brunelleschi (with whom he worked for a while), but Donatello soon developed an individual style of revolutionary boldness. The quality of Donatello’s art was first seen in his two marble figures of *St. Mark*, which showed a recognition of the individual human’s worth, and *St. George* (or *San Michele*), demonstrating the new development of perspective, creating with mathematical precision a definite space for the figures. His later style, examples of which are *St. John the Baptist* in Venice, and the *Magdalen* in Florence, is more dramatically expressive than his earlier work.



Sandro Botticelli (circa 1445–1510) – Florentine painter, who was a favorite artist of the Medici circle (patron of Florence). His celebrated mythological pictures painted for a member of the Medici family (for example, *The Birth of Venus*, circa 1478–1486) are characterized by delicate coloring, shallow modeling of the human form, and an emphasis, derived from the work of Pollaiuolo, on outline. The *Birth of Venus*, which reveals Botticelli’s preoccu-

pation with antiquity, includes the first monumental image of a “naked goddess” that had been seen since Roman times. The picture has, nevertheless, a quasi-religious meaning! In his later years, Botticelli became a follower of the religious reformer Savonarola, and his religious paintings reverted to an archaic style that is often intensely emotional. Botticelli produced a complete set of drawings illustrating Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, which are remarkable for their sensitivity of line and gentle grace.



Raphael (1483–1520) – Italian artist whose work most typifies the classical phase of the High Renaissance. After studying under Perugino, Raphael went to Florence, where both his portraits and his pictures of the *Madonna and Child* reflected the influence of Leonardo’s experiments in compositional arrangement. In 1508 he went to Rome, where he began work on the decoration of some of the papal apartments (The Stanze) planned by Julius II. The first of these, the Stanza della Segnatura, is the best known and contains the famous *School of Athens* fresco (mural) — a representation of philosophy that became the archetype for compositions based on the classical ideals of balance and order. The *Madonnas* of these years, for example, the *Sistine Madonna*, also exhibit the idealized forms and calm dignity toward which Raphael’s art was moving. Raphael made a close study of the work of Michelangelo, whose influence can be seen in the more dramatic style of the later Stanze, which were completed after the unveiling of the Sistine Chapel ceiling in 1512.



Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) – considered by some the greatest figure of the Italian Renaissance. His significance as an artist lies in his scientific analysis of natural phenomena and the preparatory studies for his paintings, throughout which he rejects the traditional schematic depiction of matter such as rocks or the texture of clothing or drapery. This objective approach is found in the two versions of *Madonna of the Rocks*. Leonardo made further advances in multi-figure compositions based on geometrical principles: the central figures of *Adoration of the Kings* (1481) form a pyramidal group within a space constructed according to a mathematical perspective. He also broke away from the traditional portrait: the *Mona Lisa* (circa 1500–1504) is an example of the half-length portrait in which the hands are exploited to complement the facial expression. Leonardo’s most historically influential work, in High Renaissance style, is the *Last Supper* (circa 1497), a mural in



the Sta Maria delle Grazie monastery, which was the first painting to examine systematically the attitudes and gestures of the subjects, and to analyze the psychological relationships between them. The *Battle of Anghiari* (circa 1503–1505) is another important, though incomplete, work.

As a scientist, his achievements are equally considerable, though his influence is limited since the bulk of his notebooks and drawings were not published until the 19th century. Written, with exceptions, in the last 30 years of his life, they reveal his true nature: that of a scientist who trusts nothing. His art reflects the empirical basis of his thought and his studies of nature can be seen as a fusion of imagination and science based upon observation and experiment.

293 Carol Dunlap, *The Culture Vulture*, pp. 225–28.

294 Ibid.

295 Ibid.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) – Italian writer and political theorist, whose name has become synonymous with political despotism. A professional diplomat, he expressed in *The Prince* (1513) concepts of statecraft whereby the welfare of the state is the aim to which all rulers should strive, whatever the moral consequences of their actions. Refer also to **Endnote 85** in Volume 3 and **Endnote 368** in Volume 10.



House of Borgia – Italian-Spanish noble family, which rose to prominence during the Italian Renaissance. Originally from Valencia, the Borgias became prominent in ecclesiastical and political affairs in the 15th and 16th centuries, producing two popes: Alfons de Borja, who ruled as Pope Callixtus III (1455–1458), and Rodrigo Lanzol Borgia, as Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503). Especially during the reign of Alexander VI, they were suspected of many crimes, including adultery, incest, simony, theft, bribery, and murder (especially by arsenic poisoning). Their coveting power made enemies of the Medici, the Sforza, and the Dominican friar Savonarola, among others. They were also patrons of the arts who contributed to the Renaissance.



296 Carol Dunlap, *The Culture Vulture*, pp. 225–28.

297 Ibid.

Albrecht Durer (1471–1528) – outstanding German artist of the Renaissance in northern Europe. While in Italy, Durer was influenced by the colors of Bellini and became interested in the writings of Leonardo. Not content with the traditional role of the northern European artist as little more than an artisan (unlike the artist in Italy), he tried to achieve a status for painters equal to that of scholars and humanists. One aspect of this pre-occupation was his study of the theoretical basis of art, which resulted in an influential treatise on proportion (1528). Although he regarded himself primarily as a painter, his paintings are relatively few, his fame depending largely on his graphic work. This consisted of woodcuts and copperplate engravings, some being single prints, such as the famous *Knight, Death and the Devil* (1513), but most of them forming a series illustrating religious themes such as the Passion, the Apocalypse, or the life of the Virgin. These prints set new standards of technical perfection and during the 16th century their compositions and expressive qualities were imitated by artists throughout Europe. Durer was among the first to produce water colors painted directly from the landscape.



298 Robert Stewart (consulting editor), *Ideas that Shaped Our World: Great Concepts of Then and Now*. (London, United Kingdom: Marshall Editions Developments Ltd., 1988), pp. 82–83.

Rene Descartes (1596–1650) – refer to **Endnote 608** in Volume 8, **Endnote 326** in Volume 10, and **Endnote 2** in Volume 11.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) – refer to **Endnote 608** in Volume 8 and **Endnote 2** in Volume 11.

299 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) – philosopher, born in Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Prussia. One of the great figures of metaphysics, Kant held that only *phenomena*, or objects of experience, can be known; things beyond experience, or *noumena*, cannot be known or scientifically demonstrated. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he argued that God, immortality, and freedom are unknowable by scientific thought, but he also held that belief in them is required by morality. Kant’s famous moral imperative is “Act only according to that rule which you can at the same time will to become a universal law.” Refer also to Endnote 114 in Volume 1, Endnote 132 in Vol-



ume 2, pp. 122, 212 in Volume 3, **Endnote 382** in Volume 5, **Endnote 135** in Volume 9, and **Endnote 338** in Volume 10.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) – refer to **Endnote 115** in Volume 3, **Endnote 147** in Volume 9, and **Endnote 1** in Volume 11.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) – refer to **Endnote 44** in Volume 2, **Endnote 284** in Volume 7, and **Endnote 635** in Volume 11.

300 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) – refer to **Endnote 41** in Volume 2.

Karl Marx (1818–1883) – refer to Endnote 42 in Volume 2, Endnote 149 in Volume 6, **Endnote 321** in Volume 7, **Endnote 540** in Volume 8, and **Endnote 249** in Volume 10.

301 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

302 Ibid.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) – refer to **Endnote 45** in Volume 2, **Endnote 65** in Volume 3, and **Endnote 1** in Volume 11.

303 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) – refer to **Endnote 115** in Volume 3.

304 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

305 Ibid.

306 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 85.

Albert Camus (1913–1960) – refer to **Endnote 45** in Volume 2 and **Endnote 1** in Volume 11.

307 Robert Stewart, *Ideas that Shaped Our World*, pp. 82–83.

308 **Talmud** – refer to Endnote 57 in Volume 1, Endnotes 128–129 in Volume 4, Endnotes 374–375 in Volume 5, Endnote 17 in Volume 6, **Endnote 312** in Volume 7, and **Endnote 569** in Volume 8.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion – refer to **Endnote 387** in Volume 5.

309 9/11 – refer to **Endnote 86** in Volume 2.

9/11 Truth Movement – scholars, theologians, engineers, architects, and ordinary people who dispute the official (government) account of the September 11 attacks of 2001. They doubt the US government- and mainstream media-promoted account that al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four airliners and crashed them into the Pentagon and New York’s Twin Towers, whereupon the crashes led to the collapse of the Twin Towers. The Truth Movement suggests a cover-up and, at the least, complicity by insiders in the US government and various intelligence agencies including the CIA, MI-6, and Mossad.

Based on whatever evidence survived from the attacks and was not hastily destroyed, scholars in the movement discuss different theories about how the attacks happened and call for a new unbiased or politically machiavellian investigation. Motives suggested by the movement include the use of the attacks as a pretext to start wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and to create opportunities to curtail American civil liberties.

Some of the organizations that collectively form the 9/11 Truth Movement include Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth, 9/11 Truth, Scholars for 9/11 Truth, Scholars for 9/11 Truth & Justice, 9/11 Citizens Watch, and 9/11 Commission Campaign. Several books and films about the subject have been published and produced, respectively. A few of the more well-known books include *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11* (2004) and *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions* (2004) by David Ray Griffin; *9/11: The Big Lie* (2003) and *Pentagate* (2002) by Thierry Meyssan; and *Solving 9-11: The Deception That Changed the World* (2012) by Christopher Bollyn. A few of the films made by people associated with the 9/11 Truth Movement include *The Great Conspiracy: The 9/11 News Special You Never Saw* (2005) by Barrie Zwicker; *9/11: Blueprint for Truth — The Architecture of Destruction* (2008) by Richard Gage; *Loose Change: An American Coup* (2009) by Dylan Avery; and *September 11: The New Pearl Harbor* (2013), a 5-hour documentary by Massimo Mazzucco. See also Endnote 148 in Volume 4.

310 Narrated by Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān and recorded by Muslim.

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ. إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كَلَّمَهُ خَيْرٌ. وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ. إِنْ أَصَابْتَهُ سُرَاءٌ شَكَرَ. فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ. وَإِنْ أَصَابْتَهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ. فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ.

311 Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (editors), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 128–29.

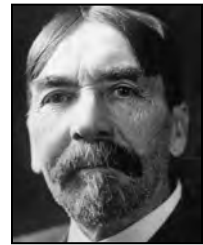
312 Ibid.

Max Weber (1864–1920) – German sociologist and economist. Born in Erfurt, Germany, Weber was educated at the University of Heidelberg and later in Berlin and Göttingen. A professor at Berlin, Freiburg, Munich, and Heidelberg, Weber pioneered the development of a methodology for social science. He opposed the Marxian view that economics is the determinant factor in social causation, insisting that the dynamic factors were much more complex than that. He stressed the role of religious values and ideologies, and the place of charismatic leaders in shaping societies.



In Weber's major work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920), he developed a thesis concerning the intimate connection between the ascetic ideal fostered by Calvinism and the rise of capitalistic institutions. He advocated that Germany establish a democratic form of government similar to the American model. Other works by Weber include *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* and *Methodology of the Social Sciences*. Refer also to **Endnote 38** in Volume 4 and **Endnote 260** in Volume 10.

Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) – political economist; he grew up in a Norwegian immigrant farming community in Wisconsin, USA, speaking only Norwegian at home and not learning English until his teens. He studied economics under John Bates Clark, a leading neoclassical economist, but rejected his ideas. He did his graduate work at Johns Hopkins University under Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of the pragmatist school in philosophy, and at Yale University under *laissez-faire* proponent William Graham Sumner. He repudiated their views as well.



Veblen is best known for his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1889), which introduced the terms “conspicuous consumption” (referring to consumption undertaken to make a statement to others about one's class or accomplishments) and “pecuniary emulation.” This first term, more than any other, is what Veblen is known for. Veblen sought to apply Darwin's evolutionary philosophy to the study of modern economic life. The industrial system, he wrote, required men to be diligent, efficient, and cooperative, while those who ruled the business world were concerned with making money and displaying their wealth; their outlook was survivalist, a remnant of a predatory, barbarian past. Calling it the “modern survivals of prowess,” he examined and dissected the amusements, fashions, sports, religion, and aesthetic tastes of the ruling class.

Veblen was the odd man out in late-19th- and early-20th-century American economics. He did not reject economists' answers to the questions they posed; he simply thought their questions were too narrow. He wanted

economists to try to understand the social and cultural causes and effects of economic changes. What social and cultural causes were responsible for the shift from hunting and fishing to farming, for example, and what were the social and cultural effects of this shift? Veblen was singularly unsuccessful at getting economists to focus on such questions.

In the late-19th century many universities were affiliated in a substantial way with churches, and so Veblen had to struggle to stay in academia because of his skepticism about religion, not to mention his rough manners and unkempt appearance, which made him unattractive to such institutions. His big break came in 1892 when the newly formed University of Chicago hired his mentor, J. Laurence Laughlin, who brought Veblen with him as a teaching assistant. Veblen later became the managing editor of the *Journal of Political Economy*, which was and is edited at the University of Chicago. Veblen spent 14 years at Chicago and the next three at Stanford. He died in obscurity in 1929 (source: <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Veblen.html>).

313 Alan Barnard, *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 128–29.

314–316 Ibid.

317 WHO media centre staff writers, ‘WHO world mental health surveys find mental disorders are widespread, disabling and often go untreated’, *World Health Organization* website (June 2, 2004).
(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2004/np14/en/>)

318 US CDC staff writers, ‘CDC Report: Mental Illness Surveillance Among Adults in the United States’, from a CDC Mental Illness Surveillance Fact Sheet, *US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* website (December 2, 2011).
(https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealthsurveillance/fact_sheet.html)

319 Victoria Bekeimpis, ‘Nearly 1 in 5 Americans Suffers from Mental Illness Each Year’, *Newsweek* website (February 28, 2014).
(<http://www.newsweek.com/nearly-1-5-americans-suffer-mental-illness-each-year-230608>)

320 Bruce E. Levine, ‘Living in America will drive you insane — literally’, *Salon* website (July 31, 2013).
(http://www.salon.com/2013/07/31/living_in_america_will_drive_you_insane_literally_partner/)

321 **Oedipus Complex** – in psychoanalysis, the unresolved desire of a child for sexual gratification through the parent of the opposite sex. From the

evidence presented in the Qur'an, this is not known to be part of man's *fiṭrah*. If it does exist in *post-fiṭrah* societies, then it is indicative of a serious problem at what may be the genetic level due to a morphological tendency that arises after generations of departure from the God-given *fiṭrah*.

322 Narrated by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

”إِذَا رَأَيْتَ اللَّهَ يُعْطِي الْعَبْدَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى مَعْاصِيهِ مَا يَحِبُّ . فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ اسْتِدْرَاجٌ .” ثُمَّ نَلَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ”فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا دُخِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ نَسِيءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرَعُوا بِمَا أَوْتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِغَنَمَةٍ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ.“

323 David Crystal (editor), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia, Second Edition*. (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 258, 403.

324 Ibid., pp. 834–35.

325 Ibid.

326 Ibid.

Joseph Banks Rhine (1895–1980) – American botanist who established parapsychology as a branch of psychology, founding the parapsychology lab at Duke University, the *Journal of Parapsychology*, the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, and the Parapsychological Association; widely considered to be the “Father of Modern Parapsychology.” Born in Waterloo, Pennsylvania, Rhine went to Ohio Northern University and the College of Wooster, after which he enlisted in the US Marine Corps, and was stationed in Santiago, Chile. Afterward, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he received a PhD in botany (1925).



Along with his wife, Rhine studied the phenomena now known as parapsychology at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. J.B. Rhine coined the term *extrasensory perception (ESP)* to describe the apparent ability of some people to acquire information without the use of the known (five) senses. He also adopted the term *parapsychology* to distinguish his interests from mainstream psychology. Rhine wrote the books *Extra-Sensory Perception after Sixty Years* and *Parapsychology: Frontier Science of the Mind*.

The Duke experiments on telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition used specially designed cards called Zener cards. About the size of regular playing cards, these cards were composed of decks of 25 cards, with each card having one of five symbols on one side: a cross, star, wavy lines, circle, and square. Under various experimental conditions, subjects would attempt to guess these cards. Out of each deck of 25 cards, 5 correct guesses were ex-

pected by chance. Using exact binomial probability calculations, it is possible to determine how “improbable” it would be to guess an excess number of cards correctly. In one set of experiments, 2,400 total guesses were made and an excess of 489 hits (correct guesses) were noted. The statistical probability of this outcome is equivalent to odds of 1,000,000:1 (against chance) and thus show significant evidence that “something occurred.”

Skeptics have argued that factors other than ESP accounted for Rhine’s observations, such as cheating by the subjects, sloppiness by the experimenters, etc. It should be noted that Rhine’s results have not been duplicated by other researchers. A number of psychology departments attempted to repeat Rhine’s experiments, but could not reproduce similar results, with some going to the extent of saying that Rhine’s research was neither balanced, nor objective (source: http://archived.parapsych.org/members/jb_rhine.html).

William McDougall (1871–1938) – British-born US psychologist influential in establishing experimental and physiological psychology; author of *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1908), which did much to stimulate widespread study of the basis of social behavior.



McDougall’s well-known *Introduction to Social Psychology* developed a Darwinian theory of human behavior based on the assumption of inherited instinct, or tendency, to note particular stimuli and to respond to them for the purpose of attaining some goal. Should response be delayed, an emotional reaction follows. Diversification and stabilization of response result from learning. A classic work, *Body and Mind: A History and Defense of Animism* (1911), represented the kind of espousal of unpopular causes that increasingly tended to isolate McDougall from colleagues.

Poor reception of his book, *The Group Mind* (1920), a speculative attempt to interpret national life and character that was intended as a sequel to *Introduction to Social Psychology* was partly responsible for his move that year to the United States and a professorship at Harvard University. Maintaining that the basic human activity is searching for goals, he generally alienated himself from the dominant US behaviorists, who confined psychology to observable evidence of organismic activity. In an attempt to demonstrate inheritance of acquired characteristics, he published *Outline of Psychology* (1923) and *Outline of Abnormal Psychology* (1926). Finding his situation at Harvard increasingly uncomfortable, in 1927 he moved to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. There, in association with J.B. Rhine, he developed a psychology department and continued various research, including work in parapsychology (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-McDougall-American-psychologist>).

327 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, pp. 901–02.

Robert Henry Thouless (1894–1984) – British psychologist and parapsychologist, best known as the author of *Straight and Crooked Thinking* (1953), which describes flaws in reasoning and argument. Educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he was awarded his PhD in 1922, Thouless went on to be a Lecturer in Psychology at Manchester, in Glasgow, and again in Cambridge. He was President of the British Association's Psychology Section (1937), and published a number of books connected with this subject. He also published *Experimental Psychical Research* (1963) and *From Anecdote to Experiment in Psychical Research* (1972).



His research into telepathy and related phenomena raised many issues that are still important. He stressed the fact that though he was an experimental psychologist, and therefore accustomed to experimental methods of study, he considered observational methods equally important in psychical research. He preferred the term *psi phenomena* (which implied no theory) to *extrasensory perception*, which assumed that some special kind of perception was at work. His own experiments did not confirm the results of J.B. Rhine and he criticized the experimental protocols of previous experimenters.

He insisted that people should accept the possibility that psi phenomena are real and objective even though they cannot be explained in terms of physical causation; that is, that they do not necessarily arise either from fraud or illusion, or from a physical cause as yet unknown (as it might be some new form of radiation). Here, hindsight, bearing in mind the discovery of a magnetic sense in birds, bees, snails, and probably in humans can only remark “why not both”; a reaction also provoked by his building on Henri Bergson's wider hypotheses to suggest that psi links us with the amoeba rather than, as Frederic Myers suggested, with “the spiritual world.” Again, why not both? (source: <http://www.survivalafterdeath.info/researchers/thouless.htm>).

328 **al-Şafā and al-Marwah** – two small hills, one now partly removed to make room for a roadway, near the Ka'bah in Makkah; what remains of both hills is enclosed within al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. The two hills are separated by a distance of 394 m (1247 ft); between their bases is a course that is called the *mas'ā*, and this distance (293 m/927 ft) is walked, and in part run, seven times by those performing the Hajj or 'Umrah. This ritual shuttling to and fro between the two hills is called the *sa'y* (the *jogging*, *track*, or *attempt*). The names of both hills are different words for *rock* or *stone*, and the origin of the rite of the *sa'y* is Hājar's casting back and forth while looking for water for her infant son, Ismā'il (ﷺ).

329 Dr. Geoffrey Wigoder (editor-in-chief), *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*. (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1992), p. 662.

Avot – Hebrew for *fathers*; tractate of the Mishnah in Nezikin having no Talmud commentary. It contains the sayings and religio-ethical teachings of the sages from the 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Because of its great ethical importance, the Avot (or Pirke Avot: “Chapters of the Fathers”) has been incorporated in the liturgy and is read in Ashkenazi communities every Sabbath afternoon during the summer, while the Sephardim recite it only at home on the Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost, the Jewish holy day commemorating Moses’ (ﷺ) reception of the Ten Commandments). Its sixth and last chapter (*kinyan torah* or *Perek Rabbi Meir*) is a later addition. An expanded version is the *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*. The language is precise and clear, the form occasionally resembling biblical aphorisms. Many commentaries have been written on the Avot, and it has been translated into other languages, making a wide impression outside the confines of Judaism.

330 **Plato** (428–327BC) – refer to **Endnote 24** in Volume 4 and **Endnote 606** in Volume 8.

331 **Stoicism** – refer to **Endnote 78** in Volume 4, **Endnote 604** in Volume 8, and **Endnote 625** in Volume 11.

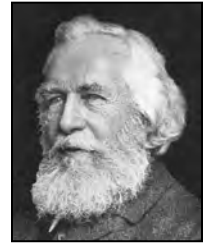
Epicureanism – refer to **Endnote 36** in Volume 2.

Ludwig Büchner (1824–1899) – German physician and philosopher who became one of the most popular exponents of 19th-century scientific materialism. He became a lecturer in medicine at the University of Tübingen, but the outspoken materialism of his masterpiece, *Kraft und Stoff* (*Force and Matter*, 1855), caused such an outcry that he was forced to resign. He retired to his hometown of Darmstadt and practiced medicine there while continuing to expound his materialistic and atheistic views in numerous publications.



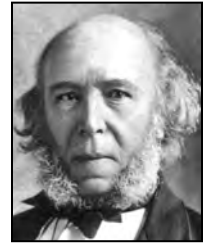
Büchner’s materialistic interpretation of the universe in *Force and Matter* created an uproar for its rejection of God, creation, religion, and free will and for its explanation of mind and consciousness as physical states of the brain produced by matter in motion. His continued defense of atheism and atomism and his denial of any distinction between mind and matter appealed strongly to freethinkers, but dialectical materialists condemned his acceptance of competitive capitalism, which Büchner viewed as an example of Charles Darwin’s “struggle for survival” (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ludwig-Buchner>).

Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) – German zoologist and evolutionist who was a strong proponent of Darwinism and who proposed new notions of the evolutionary descent of human beings. He declared that ontogeny (the embryology and development of the individual) briefly, and sometimes necessarily incompletely, recapitulated, or repeated, phylogeny (the developmental history of the species or race).



Haeckel saw evolution as the basis for a unified explanation of all nature and the rationale of a philosophical approach that denied final causes and the teleology of the Church. His *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* (*General Morphology of Organisms*, 1866) presented many of his evolutionary ideas, but his contemporaries mostly disagreed with his views (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ernst-Haeckel>).

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) – English sociologist and philosopher, an early advocate of the theory of evolution, who achieved an influential synthesis of knowledge, advocating the preeminence of the individual over society and of science over religion. His magnum opus was *The Synthetic Philosophy* (1896), a comprehensive work containing volumes on the principles of biology, psychology, morality, and sociology. He is best remembered for his doctrine of social Darwinism, according to which the principles of evolution, including natural selection, apply to human societies, social classes, and individuals as well as to biological species developing over geologic time. In Spencer's day social Darwinism was invoked to justify *laissez-faire* economics and the minimal state, which were thought to best promote unfettered competition between individuals and the gradual improvement of society through the "survival of the fittest," a term that Spencer himself introduced. Spencer was largely self-taught (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Herbert-Spencer>).



332 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fi Żilāl al-Qurʿān*, Volume 2. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 1100.

Şuhayb ibn Sinān (born circa 35^{BH}) – also known as **Şuhayb al-Rūmī**, he is said to be from the southern part of Iraq, then controlled by Byzantium, near the Tigris River. It is reported that Şuhayb was bought by a man from the tribe of Kalb who sold him in Makkah. ‘Abdullāh ibn Judʿān al-Tamīmī bought him and then set him free. It is also reported that Şuhayb ran away from Byzantium and went to Makkah, where he was in the custody of Ibn Judʿān. Ibn Saʿd relates that Şuhayb and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir both became

Muslims while the Prophet (ﷺ) was teaching in Dār al-Arḡam. Some history books describe Ṣuhayb as having a decidedly red tone of skin and an intense head of hair, which he would color with henna. Ṣuhayb, who belonged to Makkah’s lower class, was persecuted upon becoming a Muslim. He embarked on the Hijrah to Madinah with ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, among the last Muslims to have left Makkah for Madinah. Ṣuhayb fought at Badr and in other battles alongside the Prophet (ﷺ).

Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ (circa 39BH–19AH) – African slave who was born in Makkah and became the *mu‘adhdhin* (caller to *ṣalāh*) of the Prophet (ﷺ); also known as **Bilāl al-Ḥabashī**. See also **Endnote 205** in Volume 11.

‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ibn ‘Āmir (circa 56BH–37AH) – a slave in pre-Islamic Makkah; son of Sumayyah bint Khayyāt, the first martyr in Islam. ‘Ammār and his father were among the first people to become Muslims, having to endure torture and beatings as a result; some narratives say that ‘Ammār was one of the first seven Muslims in Makkah. The Prophet (ﷺ) would pass by them and say, “*Patience! O household of Yāsir! Your destination is Paradise.*”^a There is conflicting historical information about whether ‘Ammār had gone into political exile (*hijrah*) in al-Ḥabashah. Ultimately, he did go to Madinah as a *muhājir* and participated in all the military campaigns with the Prophet. He also fought at al-Yamāmah (a district in central Arabia that produced the false prophet, Musaylamah the Liar) where he lost one of his ears. On appointing him as the administrator of al-Kūfah, ‘Umar wrote to the people there saying that ‘Ammār is one of the choice companions of Muhammad (ﷺ).

Once ‘Ammār asked permission to see the Prophet, and the Prophet received him by saying, “*Welcome to he who is good-natured and exudes it.*”^b In another hadith the Prophet said about ‘Ammār, “*Indeed, ‘Ammār has been filled with commitment [to Allah] all the way to his joints.*”^c Khālīd ibn al-Walīd relates that after he and ‘Ammār exchanged (unpleasant) words, he (Khālīd) was tough on him. Thereupon, ‘Ammār complained about Khālīd to the Prophet. When Khālīd came to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), the latter said, “*Whoever turns hostile toward ‘Ammār, Allah will turn against him, and whoever dislikes ‘Ammār is disliked by Allah.*”^d

A consensual body of hadiths have the Prophet (ﷺ) foretelling, “*Feel for the son of Sumayyah [‘Ammār] for it will come to pass that the transgressing and offending camp will kill him. He is calling them to Paradise while they are calling him to the Fire.*”^e Islamic history books record that ‘Ammār, then 93 years of age, was killed while fighting alongside ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib at the Battle of Ṣiffin.

Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt (died circa 37AH) – companion of the Prophet (ﷺ); also known as Abū ‘Abdillāh. He is usually mentioned as the sixth or seventh man who embraced Islam.

Salmān al-Fārsī (died circa 36AH) – companion of the Prophet (ﷺ); originally from Persia. He has become one of the most popular figures of Muslim legend, something like a “national” hero of Muslim Persia.

Ibn Mas‘ūd (died circa 31AH) – famous companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), and “reader” of the Qur’an. He heard the Qur’an directly from the Prophet and is thought to have been the first to have attempted reading it in public in Makkah, which earned him insults from some of the *mushriks*.

- a Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.

مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِيَاسِرٍ وَعِمَارٍ وَأَمَّ عِمَارٌ وَهَمَّ يُؤذِنُونَ فِي اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَقَالَ لَهُمْ "صَبِرَا يَا آلَ يَاسِرٍ صَبِرَا يَا آلَ يَاسِرٍ فَإِن مَوْعِدَكُمُ الْجَنَّةَ."

- b Narrated by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by al-Tirmidhī.

جَاءَ عِمَارُ بْنُ يَاسِرٍ يَسْتَأْذِنُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ "أَنْذَرْتُوا لَهُ مَرْحَبًا بِالطَّيِّبِ الطَّيِّبِ."

- c Narrated by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.

إِنَّ عِمَارًا مَلِيَ إِيمَانًا إِلَى مَشَائِئِهِ.

- d Narrated by Khālid ibn al-Walīd and recorded by al-Nawawī.

مِن عَادَى عِمَارًا عَادَاهُ اللَّهُ . وَمِن أَبْغَضَ عِمَارًا أَبْغَضَهُ اللَّهُ .

- e Narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and recorded by Ibn Ḥabbān.

وَوَيْحَ ابْنِ سُمَيَّةَ تَفَتَّلَهُ الْفِئَةُ الْبَاغِيَةُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَيَدْعُوَنَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ.

333 Narrated by Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and recorded by Muslim.

Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (circa 27BH–54AH) – an Islamic general; one of the oldest companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who took part in the Battles of Badr, Uḥud, and in ensuing military campaigns. Sa‘d’s grandfather, Uhayb ibn Manāf, was the uncle of Āminah bint Wahab, the Prophet’s mother. He defeated the Persian empire at the famous Battle of al-Qādisīyah and captured Ctesiphon-Seleucia (al-Madā’in in Arabic). He also built a fortified military camp in the area of al-Kūfah. On his deathbed, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed Sa‘d as one of the six companions on the council that would choose the next Islamic leader (*khalīfah*). He refused to pay homage to Imam ‘Alī, when the latter became the *khalīfah* at the end of the term of ‘Uthmān ibn

‘Affān; and later he withdrew from getting involved in the conflict between Imam ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah. Sa‘d is said to have died in al-‘Aqīq.

334 Narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Ṭabarānī, and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

335 Narrated by Khabbāb ibn al-Aratt and recorded by al-Suddī and Abū Sa‘īd al-Azdī (this statement of the Prophet occurs at the end of a long narration).

الحمد لله الذي جعل في أمتي من أمرني ربي أن أبدأهم بالسلام.

336 Narrated by ‘Ā‘idh ibn ‘Amr and recorded by Muslim.

أَنَّ أَبَا سَفِيَانَ أْتَى عَلَى سَلْمَانَ وَصَهْبِيٍّ وَبِلَالٍ فِي نَمْرٍ. فَقَالُوا "وَاللَّهِ! مَا أَخَذَتْ سَيُوفُ اللَّهِ مِنْ عُنُقِ عَدُوِّ اللَّهِ مَاخَذَهَا." فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ "أَتَقُولُونَ هَذَا لِشَيْخِ قَرِينِ وَسَيِّدِهِمْ؟" فَأَتَى النَّبِيَّ ﷺ فَأَخْبَرَهُ. فَقَالَ "يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ! لَعَلَّكَ أَغْضَبْتَهُمْ. لَئِنْ كُنْتَ أَغْضَبْتَهُمْ لَقَدْ أَغْضَبْتَ رَبَّكَ." فَأَنَاهُمْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَقَالَ "يَا إِخْوَانَهُ! أَأَغْضَبْتُكُمْ؟" قَالُوا "لا. يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكَ يَا أَخِي!"

337 Stephen P Elliott, Martha Goldstein, Michael Upshall (editors), *Webster's New World Encyclopedia, College Edition*. (New York, New York: Helicon Publishing and Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1993), p. 995.

338 Ibid., p. 972.

339 Ibid., p. 201.

340 Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (editors), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 154–58.

Servius Tullius (ruled 575–535BCE) – traditionally the sixth king of Rome, who is credited with the Servian Constitution, which divided citizens into five classes according to wealth. This attribution may be a reading back into the uncertain past of reforms that were not effected until a much later date. Servius is said to have been the first Roman king to accede without election by the Senate, having gained the throne by popular support; and the first to be elected by the Senate alone, without reference to the people.



In legend he was born a slave in the household of the fifth (traditional) king, Tarquinius Priscus, whose daughter he married and whom he succeeded by the contrivance of his mother-in-law, Tanaquil, who had prophetic powers and saw his greatness. The emperor Claudius (reigned 41–54CE), who was an Etruscan historian, said that Servius was an Etruscan interloper

named Mastarna. Servius was eventually killed by his daughter and her husband, the seventh king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Servius-Tullius>).

341 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 154–58.

342 Ibid.

343 Ibid.

Adam Smith (1723–1790) – refer to **Endnote 191** in Volume 3 and **Endnote 340** in Volume 10.

344 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 154–58.

345–348 Ibid.

349 Ibid.

Quote from:

Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. (Chicago, Illinois, USA: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1904), pp. 11–12.

350 Ibid.

Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) – German Protestant theologian and writer on philosophy of religion and philosophy of history. Troeltsch was an important figure in the early-20th century liberal school of religious and philosophical thought in Germany. Like the young Paul Tillich, whom he influenced, Troeltsch was concerned by the situation of Christianity in the contemporary secular environment and was well aware of the limitations of the traditional theological perspective. In that context, Troeltsch sought to firmly establish religious, especially Christian belief on a less dogmatic basis, taking into consideration the empirical data of the social and historical sciences. While avoiding the reductionism of positivism, psychologism, and even Kantian ethicism, he tried to unify the complementary elements of faith and science, idealism and empiricism, philosophy and theology, the absoluteness of religious norms and the relativity of historical circumstances. In this attempt, he was only partly successful.



Troeltsch also laid the groundwork for an inclusive perspective on world religions, tackling the problem of how one can acknowledge their shared el-

ements and common values and also establish a legitimate standard of measurement. Troeltsch was also politically active; in 1919, he became a left-liberal member of the Prussian National Assembly (DDP) and undersecretary of state for religious affairs. His major writings include *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions* and *The Social Teachings of the Christian Church*, 2 volumes (source: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ernst_Troeltsch).

351 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 154–58.

352 Ibid.

Unitarians – religious group that, although in many ways is akin to Christianity, rejects the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the divinity of Christ. As an organized group, it dates back to the Anabaptists at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

Episcopalian or (Protestant) Episcopal Church – the Anglican Church in the USA, formally established in 1784 after the War of Independence when Samuel Seabury (1729–1786) was consecrated the first Bishop of Connecticut (by the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland). It is an active missionary church, especially in the Far East and South America. Traditionally, it has allowed more lay participation in the government of the church than has the Church of England.

Congregationalist or Congregationalism – a movement that sees the Christian Church as essentially a gathered community of believers, covenanting with God, keeping God’s law, and living under the lordship of Christ. It derived from the Separatists of the 16th century Reformation in England, of whom Robert Browne was an early leader. Persecution drove the Congregationalists to Holland and then to what became the USA (the Pilgrim Fathers, 1620). Church affairs, including calling a minister and appointing deacons to assist, are regulated by members at a “Church Meeting.” As a world denomination, it has a strong missionary tradition. One denomination formed the International Congregational Council in 1949, which merged with Presbyterians as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1970. With a strong tradition of tolerance and freedom of belief, its major contribution to ecumenism (the aim of promoting unity among the world’s Christian churches) has been its insistence on the importance of the local church in the event of union with other denominations.

Baptist – member of any of several Protestant and evangelical Christian sects that practice baptism by immersion only upon profession of faith. Bap-

tists seek their authority in the Bible. They originated among English Dissenters who took refuge in the Netherlands in the early-17th century, and spread by emigration and, later, missionary activity. Of the world total of approximately 31 million, some 26.5 million are in the USA and 265,000 in the UK.

The first Baptist church in America was organized in Rhode Island in 1639. Baptism grew rapidly during the Great Awakening religious revival of the 18th century. After the American Revolution, Baptism spread into the South and among African Americans, both slave and free. The Southern Baptist Convention remains the largest Protestant denomination in the USA. Other Baptists are scattered among the numerous divisions that developed during the last two centuries. In the 19th century Baptism also spread in Europe and to the British colonies. Baptists have been among the most active denominations in missionary work.

Catholic Church – from the Greek word *katholikos* meaning *general* or *universal*. The three main features of the Catholic Church include (1) as in the Apostles' creed, the universal Church that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord; (2) Christian churches with episcopal order (having bishops) and confessing ancient creeds; and (3) specifically, the Roman Catholic Church and other churches that recognize the primacy of the pope, as distinct from Protestant and Orthodox Churches.

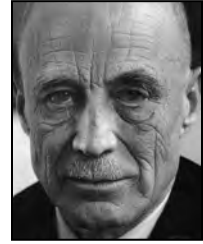
Pentecostal churches – The churches that grew out of the “holiness movement,” which developed among Methodists and other Protestants in the first decade of the 20th century. Said to be founded by the influence of William J. Seymour, Pentecostalism has around 3.5 million followers. Its tenets include baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, faith healing, and the second coming of Jesus (✝️); a perfectionist attitude toward secular affairs is common. Services feature enthusiastic sermons and hymns, and adult baptism and communion are practiced. Of the various Pentecostal churches, the Assemblies of God is the largest.

353 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 154–58.

354 Ibid.

Helmut Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962) – influential 20th-century Protestant theologian, born in Wright City, Missouri, USA, the younger brother of Reinhold Niebuhr. Helmut Niebuhr graduated from Elmhurst College (1912), Eden Theological Seminary (1915), Washington University (1917), and Yale Divinity School (1923), from where he received a PhD (1924) on the strength of his dissertation on Ernst Troeltsch. Niebuhr was ordained a

minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in 1916 and served as a pastor in St. Louis (1916–1918). He was professor at Eden Seminary (1919–1922, 1927–1931) and served as president of Elmhurst College (1924–1927). In 1931 he joined the faculty of Yale Divinity School, where he served, at the time of his death, as Sterling Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics.



Like many dialectical theologians, Niebuhr sought to remain true to the best insights of both liberal theology and the classical Christian tradition. This is reflected in the fact that the two greatest influences on his theology were Troeltsch and Karl Barth. The former influence is reflected in Niebuhr's interest in the sociology of religion and his appreciation of the "conditionedness" or relativity of all historical religions. This is evident in such books as *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), *Christ and Culture* (1951), and his major theological work, *The Meaning of Revelation* (1941). The influence of Barth is seen in Niebuhr's emphasis on the sovereignty of God and on the primacy of revelation.

Since human knowledge always is conditioned by the point of view man takes, Niebuhr insists that Christian faith begins with revelation, which is mediated through a historical community, the church. Revelation is that inner history of events that gives meaning and shape to outer, or impersonal, history. Niebuhr contends that Christian revelation enables people to avoid a narrow tribal perspective on events as well as the impersonalism of much modern scientific positivism, since it offers a personalistic vision that is at the same time universal and stands in judgement on all egocentric interpretations of experience.

For Niebuhr sin is both disloyalty, the failure to worship the true God, and idolatry, the giving of one's ultimate loyalty to something less than God. Since every person trusts in something and has some object of commitment, Niebuhr insists that to have such a faith is to have a god. However, a true faith is trust in that reality (God) that is the absolute and eternal ground of Being, that which abides when all else passes. Such a faith frees people from ultimate reliance on merely finite values and hopes. Faith, or man's apprehension and response to Being, always begins, however, with revelation, with the way Being reveals itself to man. Such a revelation lies, finally, beyond scientific proof and therefore calls for personal, existential decision, trust, and loyalty.

Niebuhr is often spoken of as "a theologian's theologian." This does not imply that his work is remote and esoteric. Rather, it refers to the fact that all of Niebuhr's writings deal with the most sophisticated and fundamental issues facing theology and the church, and to the fact of his profound influence on an entire generation of younger theologians and clergy.

Liston Pope (1909–1974) – dean of the Yale Divinity School (1949–1962) and professor of social ethics. Liston Pope was born in Thomasville, North Carolina and graduated in 1929 from Duke University; he received a PhD from Yale in 1940. In 1935 he was ordained a Congregational minister. He became pastor of the Humphrey Street Congregational Church in High Point, North Carolina (1935), serving to 1938, when he joined the Yale faculty.



An outspoken theologian who combined a deep interest in sociology with worldwide activities in religious education, Dr. Pope was a staunch advocate of racial equality and religious ecumenism. His book, *The Kingdom Beyond Caste* (1957), leveled the charge that the American church had “lagged far behind the Supreme Court as the conscience of the nation on questions of race, and it has fallen far behind trade unions, factories, schools, department stores, athletic gatherings, and most other major areas of human association as far as the achievement of integration in its own life is concerned.”

Dr. Pope, who was also in the forefront of the world ecumenical movement, worked for unity among Protestant denominations as well as with the Roman Catholic Church. “A split mankind and split atom can hardly coexist on the same planet,” he warned in a 1957 speech. He was one of the three American members of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, as well as a member of its central committee. Dr. Pope was also a director of the Rockefeller Brothers Theological Fellowship Program; and for many years had been a Congregational delegate to the National Council of Churches in the USA.

Among labor unions, he performed extensive church work and research and made equally broad studies of racial problems here and in Africa, where he was a Rosenwild Fellow and Phelps-Stokes Visitor in 1949 (source: <http://www.nytimes.com/1974/04/16/archives/liston-pope-dean-of-yale-divinity-served-from-1949-to-1962civil.html>).

Edward Ralph “Ted” Wickham (1911–1994) – Suffragan Bishop of Middleton (1959–1982) in the Anglican Church, and before that the pioneering leader of the Sheffield Industrial Mission. In the latter post he was internationally celebrated for his attempt to engage the Anglican Church in the life of an increasingly secularized industrial society.



Born in London, he left school at the age of 15 and worked in a thermoplastic factory for several years. During the 1930s, he was unemployed for a time. With ordination in mind he taught himself Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and in 1937 obtained a London University external

BD. He then spent a few terms at St. Stephen’s House, Oxford, and in 1938 was ordained to a curacy in the poor Tyneside parish of Shieldfield. There he became aware of the extent to which the Church was out of touch with the working class, and began to consider how the problem might be tackled.

During his years in Sheffield (1944–1959) he formed a large team of industrial chaplains who worked in the iron, steel, and engineering works of South Yorkshire, undertaking some pastoral work but mainly holding group meetings during breaks and between shifts to discuss the relationship between faith and the issues arising in the workplace.

Wickham’s work in Britain coincided with the activities of the priest-worker movement in France, but he was strongly opposed to the employment of ordained men in secular work and also to the Anglican Church identifying itself only with shop-floor workers. “Industrial mission,” he said “must relate to all men, to the weak of this world as well as the strong — and both are present in industry in vast numbers.”

While in Sheffield, he wrote *Church and People in an Industrial City* (1957) — a study of church life in Sheffield, which remains a standard work on the Christian mission in an industrial society. His later books included *Encounters with Modern Society* (1964), *Growth & Inflation* (1975), and *Growth, Justice and Work* (1985).^a

a Trevor Beeson (compiler), *Priests and Prelates — The Daily Telegraph Clerical Obituaries*. (London, United Kingdom: Continuum, 2002), pp. 117–19.

355 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 154–58.

356 Ibid.

357 Ibid.

358 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 615–16.

359 Ibid.

Plato’s Allegory of the Cave – an illustration crafted to reveal a hidden meaning in which Plato distinguishes between people who mistake sensory knowledge for the truth and people who really do see the truth. It goes something like this:

Imagine a cave, in which there are a group of prisoners. The prisoners are tied to some rocks, their arms and legs are bound, and their heads are immobilized so that they cannot look at anything

but the stone wall in front of them. These prisoners have been in the cave since birth and have never seen outside of it. Behind the prisoners is a fire to cast light on the stone wall as well as a scaffolding for “others” to walk on. People outside the cave walk atop this scaffolding carrying objects on their heads including animals, plants, wood, and stone.

So, imagine that you are one of the prisoners. You cannot look at anything behind or to the side of you — you must look at the wall in front of you. When people walk along the scaffolding, you can see shadows of the objects they are carrying cast on to the wall. If you had never seen the real objects ever before, you would believe that the shadows of objects were “real.”

Plato suggests that the prisoners would begin a “game” of guessing which shadow would appear next. If one of the prisoners were to correctly guess, the others would praise him as clever and say that he were a master of nature.

One of the prisoners then escapes from his shackles and leaves the cave. He is shocked at the world he discovers outside the cave and does not believe it can be real. As he becomes used to his new surroundings, he realizes that his former view of reality was wrong. He begins to understand his new world, and sees that the Sun is the source of life and goes on an intellectual journey where he discovers beauty and meaning. He sees that his former life, and the guessing game he played with the other prisoners is useless.

The prisoner returns to the cave to inform the other prisoners of his findings. They do not believe him and threaten to kill him if he tries to set them free.

In this allegory, the cave represents people who believe that knowledge comes from what is seen or heard in the world — empirical evidence. The cave illustrates that believers of empirical knowledge are trapped in a “cave” of misunderstanding.

The shadows represent the perceptions of those who believe empirical evidence ensures real knowledge. If one believes that what he sees should be taken as truth, then he is merely seeing a shadow of the truth. In Plato’s opinion he is a *pleb* (an ignorant or unreflective person, usually referring to one coming from the lower classes) if he believes this.

The game represents how people believe that one person can be a “master” when he has knowledge of the empirical world. Plato is demonstrating that this master does not actually know any truth, suggesting that it is ridiculous to admire such a person.

The escaped prisoner represents the philosopher, who seeks knowledge outside of the cave and beyond the senses. The Sun represents philosophical

truth and knowledge. His intellectual journey represents a philosopher's search for truth and wisdom. The other prisoners' reaction to the escapee returning represents people being more secure in their ignorance than in having to struggle to understand something they previously did not, even if it is true. Hence, the prisoners of the false (manufactured) reality will not trust their fellow prisoner who escaped, even though he is speaking the truth (source: <http://www.philosophyzer.com/the-allegory-of-the-cave-by-plato-summary-and-meaning/>).

360 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 615–16.

361 Ibid.

362 Ibid.

World Council of Churches – refer to Endnote 349 in Volume 7 and **Endnote 303** in Volume 10.

363 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 615–16.

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968) – refer to **Endnote 87** in Volume 2, Endnote 374 in Volume 7, Endnote 300 in Volume 10, and **Endnote 644** in Volume 11.

364 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, pp. 615–16.

365–370 Ibid.

371 Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal, *The New State of the World Atlas, 4th Edition*. (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster Inc: 1991), pp. 153–54

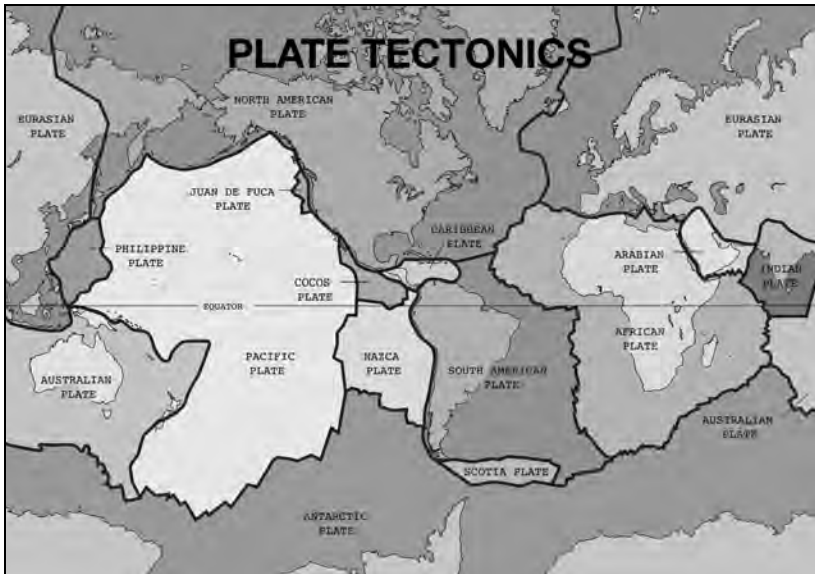
372 Ibid.

373 Phillipa Sandall, Valerie Marlborough, Dr. Tom McKnight (editors), *Geographica: the Complete Illustrated Atlas of the World*. (New South Wales, Australia: Random House Australia Pty Ltd, 2005), p. 18.

374 Ibid (refer to Earth's constantly moving tectonic plates on the next page).

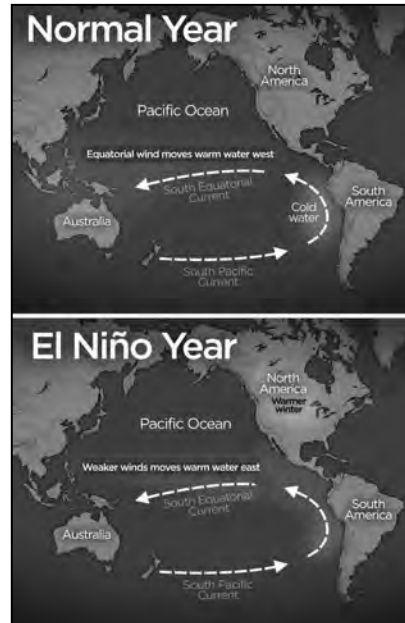
375–376 Ibid.

377 Ibid.



El Niño – Spanish for *the Child* or *Christ Child*; an anomalous seasonal ocean current along the coast of Peru, often occurring toward the end of Christmas (hence its name). It carries warm, low salinity, nutrient-depleted tropical surface waters along the coast of northern Peru, bringing a stop to the normal upwelling of cooler nutrient-rich water that supports abundant growth of marine plankton, fish, and sea birds. Severe El Niños can result in the collapse of the food chain, causing massive mortality to marine life. The resulting decay of dead organisms can produce enough hydrogen sulphide gas in surface waters to stain the hulls of ships, thereby giving rise to an alternative name for El Niño, the Callao Painter,

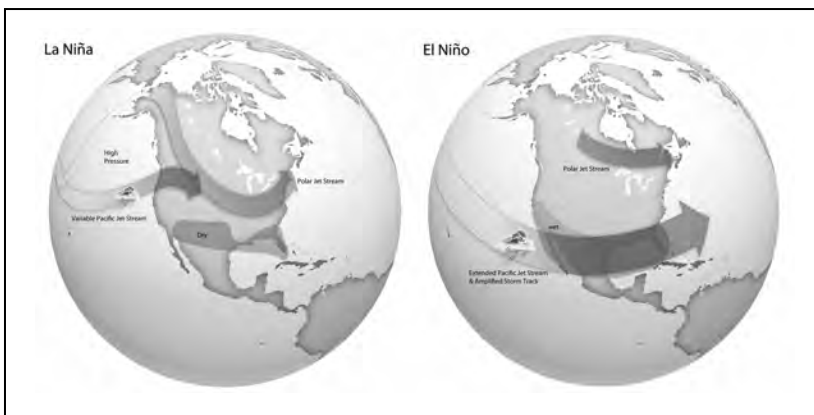
after the Peruvian port of Callao. Once thought to be produced by changes in local wind conditions affecting the ocean, it is now known to be part of a much larger phenomenon related to changes in atmospheric pressure in the South Pacific, called the southern oscillation. Referred to as ENSO



events (for **El Niño**-Southern Oscillation), the phenomenon may recur every 2–10 years, and has been blamed for such wide-ranging effects as droughts in northern Australia, rising sea level, severe storm damage along the west coast of the Americas, torrential rainfall along the coast of Ecuador and Peru, more frequent tropical cyclones, and severe winters in Europe and North America.

La Niña – Spanish for *the little girl*; also sometimes referred to as El Viejo, anti-El Niño, or simply “a cold event.” It represents periods of below-average sea surface temperatures across the eastern central Equatorial Pacific Ocean. Global climate La Niña impacts tend to be opposite those of El Niño. In the tropics, ocean temperature variations in La Niña events also tend to be opposite those of El Niño. During a La Niña year, winter temperatures are warmer than normal in the southeast and cooler than normal in the north-west of the United States.

El Niño and La Niña are opposite phases of the ENSO cycle. The ENSO cycle is a scientific term that describes the fluctuations in temperature between the ocean and atmosphere in the eastern central Equatorial Pacific Ocean (approximately between the International Date Line and 120° west). La Niña is sometimes referred to as the cold phase of ENSO while El Niño as its warm phase. These deviations from normal surface temperatures can have large-scale impacts not only on ocean processes, but also on global weather and climate. El Niño and La Niña episodes typically last 9–12 months, but some prolonged events may last for years. While their frequency can be quite irregular, El Niño and La Niña events occur on average every 2–7 years. Typically, El Niño occurs more frequently than La Niña (source: <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/ninonina.html>).



greenhouse effect – refer to **Endnote 409** in Volume 5.

378 Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, p. 18.

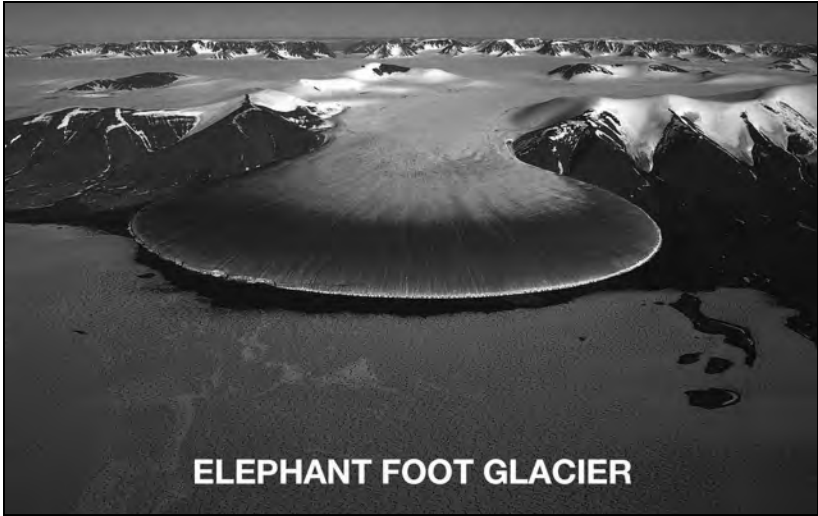
379 Ibid.

380 Ibid., p. 26.

Rainfall and water flow in creeks and rivers are the main agents of landform creation in humid areas; glaciers are the most important agents at high latitudes and in mountainous areas of heavy snowfall; land wind is important in arid areas. Glaciers, rivers, winds, and waves are powerful erosive agents. Glaciers pluck pieces of rock from valley sides, rivers carry rock fragments along in their current, and winds lift and transport particles of dust. Air and water velocities determine the erosive force of winds and rivers, and the rock fragments they carry with them make these agents additionally abrasive.

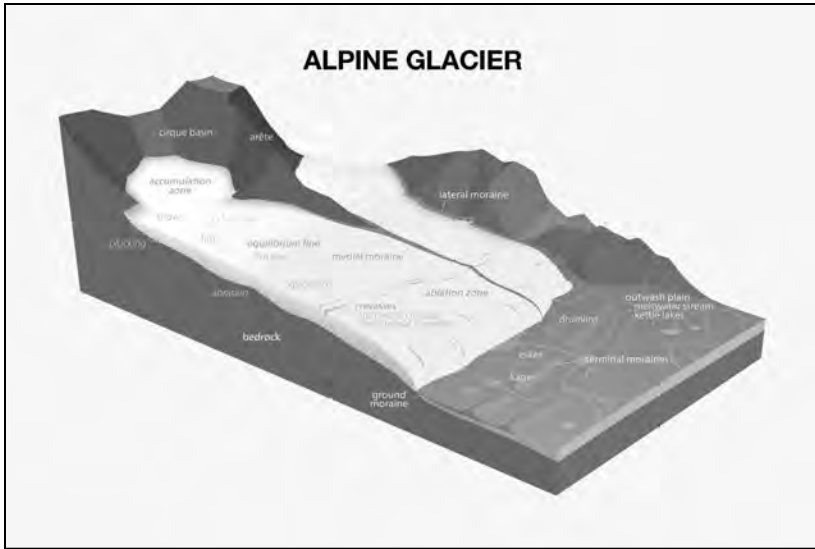
Rock fragments embedded in glaciers scour rock surfaces on the glacier's floor and sides; sand and gravel in fast-flowing rivers erode their floors and banks; and wind-borne sand blasts rock surfaces, creating intricate structures. Platforms, caves, and cliffs are formed by the action of waves carrying sand, pebbles, and boulders, and beating them against rocky coasts. Rivers in mountainous areas flow rapidly because of steep slope gradients. Such streams may be highly erosive, and may cut their channels vertically, producing V-shaped valley profiles. The amount of rock particle rivers and winds carry is determined by velocity; in general, larger particle sizes need greater velocities. At lower speeds, rivers deposit their sediment load, which then forms fertile alluvial flats and broad alluvial plains. These areas may be periodically inundated by floods. Much of the sediment, carried by rivers in flood is deposited at the coast as deltas. Several major rivers carry high sediment loads — the Huang River in China carries more than one and a half million tonnes annually.

Glaciers (images on the facing page show the Elephant Foot glacier off the eastern coast of Greenland and the Perito-Moreno glacier in Argentina) are made of solid ice, and result from the compaction of snow. Some of the longest glaciers remaining, at 39–72 km (24–46 miles) in length, are found in the Karakoram ranges of the Himalayas. Although they generally move very slowly (2–3 cm/day or 0.75–1.25 in/day), glaciers are powerful eroders, and can move up to 4–5 m/day (13–16.5 ft/day). Glaciers typically create U-shaped valleys called troughs. Glaciers at the head of sloping valleys give rise to basin-shaped features known as cirques. When cirques from two opposing sides meet through erosion, a pass, or col, is formed. Between glacial valleys, sharp ridges, known as aretes, develop. At the top of glacial mountains, aretes meet at sharp peaks called horns, such as those on the Matterhorn (mountain in Switzerland) and Mt. Everest. Where glaciers have disappeared, troughs are exposed, along with tributary glacial valleys, and these form



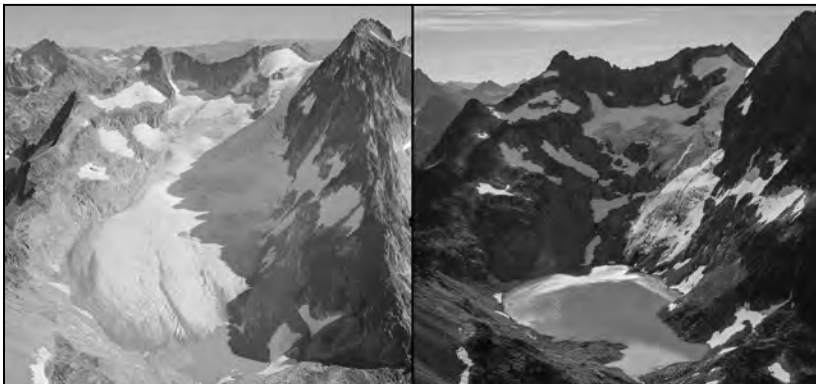
hanging valleys perched above scarps. They often have streams cascading over them as waterfalls, and are often used as sites for the generation of hydroelectric power. A glacier carries assorted rock debris (boulders, pebbles, or finer materials) on or beneath its solid surface. As a glacier moves, it plucks rocks from the valley walls, and the rock debris falls along the sides of the glacier to form what are known as lateral moraines. When two glaciers meet and coalesce, two lateral moraines join in the center of the new, larger glacier, forming a medial moraine. As mountain glaciers reach lower, warmer levels, they melt and drop their debris, which forms terminal moraines (a cross-section of the above is given on the following page as well as an image of how global climate change has led to the worldwide shrinkage of glaciers).





The resulting meltwater carries a fine glacial flour, which may be spread as a vast depositional plain. Rich soils have developed in such plains in both northern Europe and the northern United States.

Depending on their velocity, winds can lift loose rock particles or soils. Generally speaking, the wind transports particles that are dry and not protected by plant cover; so wind action is mostly restricted to arid and semiarid regions, and some coastal areas. Strong winds can scoop out hollows in loose, dry soil. This process is known as deflation, and the hollows formed are called blowouts. These can range in diameter from about a meter to a kilometer or more. Strong winds can lift and carry sands, while lighter winds lift and carry silts and clays. High winds rework sand masses into dunes of various types, depending on sand availability and wind direction. Sand



dunes in deserts include crescent-shaped barchans, which have gentle windward slopes and abrupt leeward (on the side of the wind) slopes — the crescent’s horns point downwind. Silt-sized particles are transported by the wind to form thick, fertile deposits known as loess. Extensive deposits of loess are found on the edges of some deserts and in areas once glaciated (northern China and the Mississippi Valley, for instance; refer to the image below).

When waves approach a coastline made up of headlands and bays, they gather around the headlands and spread out in the bays. Wave energy becomes concentrated on the headlands, where the steady pounding carves platforms and cliffs. In bays, by contrast, wave energy is dissipated, and the waves deposit sand and other detritus (loose material, fragments, and silt). These may also be transported along the shore, depending on the angle of the coast in relation to the direction of the waves. Waves tend to approach a beach perpendicularly. The movement of the wave as it runs onto the beach is known as swash; the water, or backwash, then returns to the sea. Swash and backwash move sand along beaches, which contributes to littoral or longshore drift (when waves approach the beach at an angle). Along coastal plains, waves tend to build sand barriers by the shore. Lagoons develop behind these barriers, which are connected to the sea by tidal inlets (alcoves). These lagoons can later fill with sediment, a stage in the gradual seaward extension of the coastal plain. The sea-level rise, on the other hand, along with stark wave erosion, can drive the sand barriers landward.

Rock debris, such as loose, unsupported material and waterlogged soil, tends to move down hill slopes through the action of gravity. Slow movements known as soil creep are often imperceptible, and are indicated only by the changed position of fixed objects — trees, fences, and houses. The



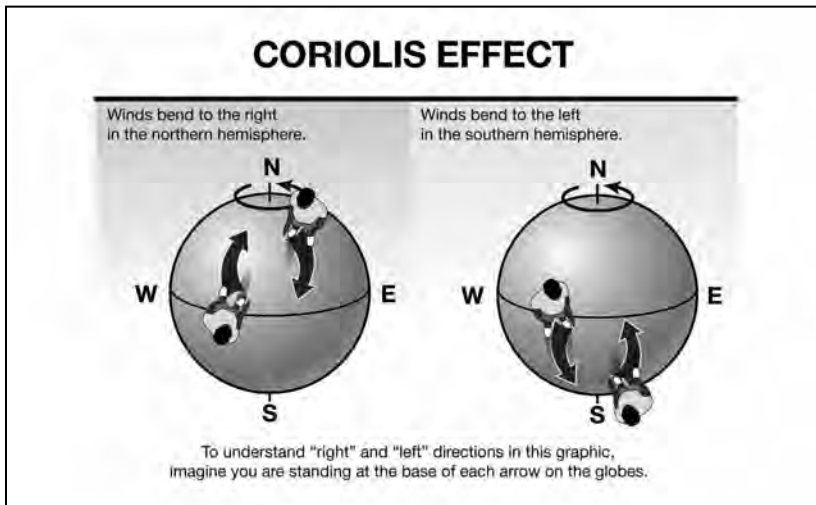
shaking of sloping ground by earthquakes can trigger a more rapid movement of loose materials. Fast movements such as landslides (or snow avalanches) tend to occur after heavy rains (or snowfalls) on steep slopes. In contrast, to landslides, slumps are formed when slopes slip in a backward rotation, a phenomenon sometimes found in waterlogged soils.

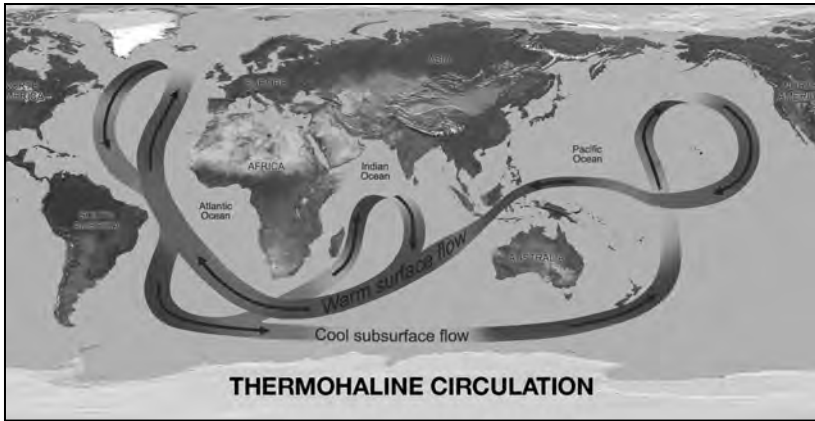
There is information in scientific circles that during the next several decades, because of global climate change, the sea level may rise at rates up to 100 mm/yr (4 in/yr). This would cause the loss of sand barriers and adjacent lagoons and wetlands, and the loss of some islands on coral reefs.

“And He knows all that is on land and in the sea...” Earth is the only planet in the Solar System with seas and oceans, and these cover more than 70% of its surface. The oceans lie in large and deep basins in the Earth’s crust. The seas, however, spread to the margins of the continents, drowning their shelves. The melting of the ice sheets following the end of the last ice age (on the current scientific calendar) resulted in a rise in sea levels and thus an increased area covered by seas.

The waters of the ocean are in constant motion. This motion takes the form of ocean currents that move at an average of 8 km/hr (5 miles/hr) and redistribute heat energy, thus influencing climate. Winds are the most important originators of ocean currents in the upper layers of the seas: they produce a frictional drag on the water, which pushes it along.

As water is fluid, it is subject to the Coriolis force (caused by Earth’s rotation) — that is, currents tend to move toward the right in the northern hemisphere and toward the left in the southern hemisphere. The resulting deflection is 45 degrees to that of the direction of the wind. In the deeper parts of the oceans, it is water density that produces ocean currents. Water



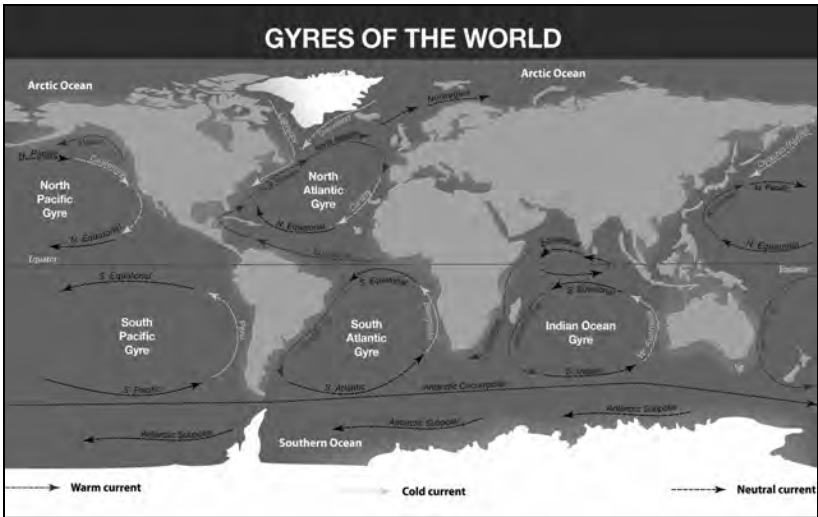


density depends upon two factors: temperature and salinity. The colder the water is, the denser it is; the higher the salinity, the higher the density. The circulation that results from temperature and salinity difference is referred to as thermohaline circulation.

There are broadly two types of ocean currents: warm currents, which originate in tropical areas; and cold currents, which originate in polar areas. Warm currents are mostly located in the upper 100 m (330 ft) of the seas. Cold currents, on the other hand, are often encountered at greater depths. They move more slowly because of the overlying pressure exerted by surface water. The exchange of heat energy occurs as equatorial currents move toward the poles and polar currents move toward the equator. This exchange moderates the Earth's heat patterns, preventing the equatorial belt from becoming unbearably hot and the waters in the temperate zone from becoming much colder than they are today. Ocean water temperatures are a major influence on climatic conditions; warm currents bring warmth to the coastlines along which they flow and, likewise, cold currents reduce temperatures in the lands along which they flow.

Winds blowing westward along the equatorial belt generate west-flowing ocean currents called equatorial currents. When water from the equatorial currents piles up against land, the current reverses its direction and flows eastward, resulting in equatorial counter-currents. Equatorial currents turn toward the right in the northern hemisphere and toward the left in the southern hemisphere as a result of the Coriolis effect, and because of that motion, they develop into huge, circular, whorl-like rotating systems. These systems are known as gyres. Gyres rotate in a clockwise direction in the northern hemisphere and in an anti-clockwise direction in the southern hemisphere.

The distribution of the continental landmasses influences the size and shape of these gyres. There are major gyres in the northern and southern At-



lantic and Pacific Oceans, and in the southern Indian Ocean. There is also a gyre in the northern Indian Ocean, but it is restricted by the landmasses surrounding it, and so is much smaller. Gyres carry warm equatorial water into the temperate zone. These currents carry about 25% of all the heat that moves poleward from the equator. In the North Atlantic, the Gulf Stream or North Atlantic Drift, which flows from the Gulf of Mexico toward western Europe, warms the seas around those countries, making their climates warmer. Thus London is warmer than New York, even though New York lies at a much lower latitude, because of this warming effect.

The Japan Current, flowing from Southeast Asia, warms the eastern coasts of China and Japan. The west coast of Japan, on the other hand, is cooled by cold currents originating in northern areas. The magnitude of large ocean currents is demonstrated by the enormous amount of water they can carry, for example, the Gulf Stream carries more than 50 million m^3/s (65.5 million cubic yards per second).

The build-up of warm waters can have significant effects on climate. For example, tropical cyclones, hurricanes, or typhoons develop in the areas of warm water in Southeast Asia. These can have devastating effects on those areas. Also, temperature changes in the waters of the southern Pacific Ocean provide indications of the El Niño and La Niña weather disturbances. The onset of El Niño is heralded by unusually high water temperatures in the central Pacific, with the warm water spreading across to South America.

Cold ocean currents originate in polar regions. They flow deep in the oceans and only surface through upwelling, when winds blowing from the land drive warm surface water back out into the ocean. Cold water then rises to the surface. Two well-known upwelling sites, both on the western sides of

the continents, are the Humboldt or Peru Current along the coast of South America and the Benguela Current in southern Africa. Their nutrient-laden waters are rich breeding grounds for fish. Two important cold currents flowing on the eastern sides of continents are the Kamchatka Current, which flows alongside Siberia and Japan, and the Labrador Current, which flows along the east coasts of Canada and the United States.

Seas in the polar zones can freeze, forming pack ice that covers the sea surface. If subjected to strong currents or winds, this pack ice can break into pieces called floes. Ice broken from ice sheets can also be seen floating in the seas as icebergs. Ice floes are mostly less than 5 m (16.5 ft) thick — much thinner than icebergs. Icebergs can be very thick indeed — up to hundreds of meters — but only about one-sixth of an iceberg floats above water. The rest of it remains submerged or hidden below the water, making it a major navigational hazard. There are always likely to be icebergs in the northern Atlantic; they originate from the Greenland ice sheet and its glaciers.

The waters around Antarctica flow in an unbroken band around the globe because there are no land areas to obstruct them. The West Wind Drift, as the winds blowing incessantly from the west to the east are called, results in some of the world’s most turbulent seas. The seas in latitudes between 40° and 60° south have been referred to as the “Roaring Forties,” the “Furious Fifties,” and the “Screaming Sixties.”

In the Southern Ocean around Antarctica, between the latitudes 50° and 60° south, cold currents interact with the warm currents coming from the tropics. The cold, nutrient-rich waters are driven upward by this convergence, becoming the breeding ground for abundant oceanic life. These waters are thus a vital component for the food chain that depends upon this profusion of aquatic life.^a

a Phillipa Sandall et al., *Geographica*, pp. 26–27, 32–33.

381 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster’s New World Encyclopedia*, p. 693.

Henri Bergson (1859–1941) – philosopher and writer, born in Paris; professor at the College de France (1900–1921). He popularized the idea of an *élan vital* (creative impulse) at the heart of evolution, rather than a deterministic natural selection. His major works were more literary than technical, and include *Essai sur les donees immediate de conscience* (*Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, 1889), *Matiere et memoire* (*Matter and Memory*, 1896), and *L’Evolution creatrice* (*Creative Evolution*, 1907). He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927.



Francis Herbert Bradley (1846–1924) – philosopher, born in Glasbury, a village in Powys, Wales, United Kingdom. He became a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, in 1870 and was probably the most important figure in the British idealist movement of this period, much influenced by Kant and Hegel. His most important works are *Ethical Studies* (1876), *Principles of Logic* (1883), and the highly original *Appearance and Reality* (1893).

Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) – Italian statesman, philosopher, historian, and critic, born in Pescasseroli, Italy. He studied at Rome University, and in Naples devoted himself to literature and antiquarian studies, founding the review *La Critica* in 1903, and making major contributions to idealistic aesthetics in his *Estetica* (*Aesthetic*, 1902) and *La Poesia* (*Poetry*, 1936). In 1910 he became a senator, and was minister of education (1920–1921) when, with the rise of Mussolini, he had to resign his professorship at Naples. He was opposed to totalitarianism, and with the fall of Mussolini (1943) helped to resurrect liberal institutions in Italy.



John McTaggart (1866–1925) – philosopher, born in London; professor at Cambridge (1897–1923). His systematic metaphysics is set out in two volumes in *The Nature of Existence* (1921, and posthumously in 1927). He is regarded as the most important of the Anglo-Hegelian or Idealistic philosophers who dominated British and American thought in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.



Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) – English mathematician and philosopher whose early work on mathematics and logic culminated in his joint authorship, with Bertrand Russell, of *Principia Mathematica* (1910–1914). See also **Endnote 116** in Volume 3.

Ludwig (Josef Johann) Wittgenstein (1889–1951) – philosopher, born in Vienna. He studied engineering at Berlin and Manchester universities, then became interested in mathematical logic, which he studied in Cambridge under Bertrand Russell (1912–1913). While serving in the Austrian army in WWI, he wrote the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921), in which he examined the nature and limits of language; meaningful propositions are “pictures” of the facts of which the world is composed.

He then turned temporarily away from philosophy. He gave away the money he had inherited, and lived a simple ascetic life, working as an elementary schoolteacher in Austrian country districts, a gardener’s assistant in

a monastery, and an amateur architect and builder. In 1929 he returned to philosophy and to Cambridge, where he became professor (1939–1947), interrupted only by a period of war service as a porter at Guy’s Hospital, London, and as a lab assistant at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Manchester. He became a British subject in 1938.



He was a charismatic and highly influential figure throughout the English-speaking philosophical world. The posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) represented the new direction his work took in this period. In this he sees language as a toolkit, not a calculus, and studies the “language games” whereby language is given its meaning in actual use. Philosophy becomes a therapeutic technique for dissolving problems and removing intellectual anxieties. Other posthumous works include *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1956), *The Blue and Brown Books* (1958), and *On Certainty* (1969).

Aristotle (384–322BCE) – refer to Endnote 26 in Volume 4, **Endnote 606** in Volume 8, and various citations in Volume 11.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) – theologian and philosopher, born in Rocca Secca (close to Naples, Italy). The greatest figure of scholasticism and the founder of what Pope Leo XIII (1879) declared to be the official philosophy of Roman Catholicism. His system, as expressed in the *Summa Theologica* (1267–1273) and other writings, is based on the works of Aristotle. Accordingly, he saw the universe as an ordered construct of things, ascending to God, the only necessary and self-sufficient being. He felt that the truths of faith and reason were complementary; hence, there are no conflicts between theology, science, or philosophy. Refer also to **Endnote 128** in Volume 2; **pp. 212, 235, and 335**, and **Endnote 95** in Volume 3; pp. 36–37, and 71 in Volume 4; p. 212 in Volume 6; **pp. 321–24**, and **Endnote 413** in Volume 7; **Endnote 137** in Volume 9; and **pp. 444–49** in Volume 11.



Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) – among the first 19th-century philosophers to contend that at its core, the universe is not a rational place. Inspired by Plato and Kant, both of whom regarded the world as being more amenable to reason, Schopenhauer developed their philosophies into an instinct-recognizing and ultimately ascetic outlook, emphasizing that in the face of a world filled with endless strife, man ought to minimize his natural desires for the sake of achieving a more tranquil frame of mind and a disposition toward universal beneficence. Often considered to be a thoroughgoing

pessimist, Schopenhauer in fact advocated ways — via artistic, moral, and ascetic forms of awareness — to overcome a frustration-filled and fundamentally painful human condition. Since his death in 1860, his philosophy has had a special attraction for those who wonder about life's meaning, along with those engaged in music, literature, and the visual arts.



Born in Danzig, Prussia (now Gdansk, Poland), Schopenhauer was the son of a wealthy merchant, Heinrich Floris Schopenhauer. Arthur enjoyed a gentlemanly private education. He then attended a private business school, where he became acquainted with the spirit of the Enlightenment. In the fall of 1809 he matriculated as a student of medicine at the University of Göttingen and mainly attended lectures on the natural sciences. As early as his second semester, however, he transferred to the humanities, concentrating first on the study of Plato and Immanuel Kant. In Rudolstadt, during the summer of 1813, he finished his dissertation, which earned him the doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Jena.

The major expression of his ideas came in *The World as Will and Idea* (1819, first edition), a comprehensive series of reflections that include successively the theory of knowledge and the philosophy of nature, aesthetics, and ethics. Schopenhauer's influence has been strong among literary figures, which include poets, playwrights, essayists, novelists and historians such as Charles Baudelaire, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Bernhard, Jorge Luis Borges, Jacob Burckhardt, Joseph Conrad, André Gide, George Gissing, Franz Grillparzer, Thomas Hardy, Gerhardt Hauptmann, Friedrich Hebbel, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Joris Karl Huysmans, Ernst Jünger, Karl Kraus, D.H. Lawrence, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, Stéphane Mallarmé, Thomas Mann, Guy de Maupassant, Herman Melville, Robert Musil, Edgar Allan Poe, Marcel Proust, Arno Schmidt, August Strindberg, Italo Svevo, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev, Frank Wedekind, W.B. Yeats, and Emile Zola. In general, these authors were inspired by Schopenhauer's sense of the world's absurdity, either regarded in a more nihilistic and gloomy manner, or regarded in a more lighthearted, absurdist, and comic manner.

Among philosophers, one can cite Henri Bergson, Julius Bahnsen, Eduard von Hartmann, Suzanne Langer, Philipp Mainländer, Hans Vaihinger, and Friedrich Nietzsche, where each tended to focus on selected aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy, such as his views on the meaning of life, his theory of the non-rational will, his theory of music, or his Kantianism.

Schopenhauer's theory of music, along with his emphasis upon artistic genius and the world-as-suffering, was also influential among well-known composers such as Johannes Brahms, Antonín Dvorak, Gustav Mahler, Hans Pfitzner, Sergei Prokofiev, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakoff, Arnold Schönberg, and Richard Wagner. Insofar as he influenced Wagner, who is the father of 20th-century music written to accompany and enhance motion

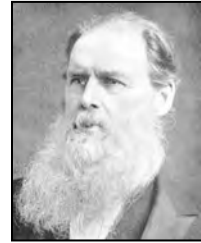
pictures, Schopenhauer’s theory of music as the expression of a continual flow of emotion stands significantly as the basis of the contemporary experience of music in artistic and communicational media (source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/>).

382 Wendy Doniger (consulting editor), *Miriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions*. (Springfield, Massachusetts, USA: Meriam-Webster, Inc., 1999), pp. 678–79.

383 Ibid.

384 Ibid.

Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) – English anthropologist regarded as the founder of cultural anthropology. His most important work, *Primitive Culture* (1871), influenced by Darwin’s theory of biological evolution, developed the theory of an evolutionary, progressive relationship between “primitive” and modern cultures.



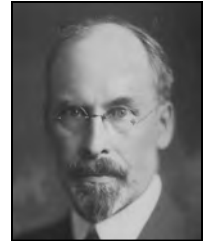
Tylor, the son of a prosperous Quaker brass foundry owner, attended Quaker school until he was 16, when, barred by his faith from entering a university, he became a clerk in the family business. In 1855 he traveled to America and in 1856 to Cuba, where he met the archaeologist and ethnologist Henry Christy. Christy was on his way to Mexico to study remnants of the ancient Toltec culture in the Valley of Mexico, and he persuaded Tylor to accompany him. The expedition lasted six months, and after its conclusion Tylor returned to England. His experiences were published in his first book, *Anahuac: or Mexico and the Mexicans, Ancient and Modern* (1861). Although mainly a travelogue, *Anahuac* contains elements that characterize Tylor’s later work: a firm grasp on factual data, a sense of cultural differences, and a curious combination of empirical methods with occasional hints of the superiority of a 19th-century Englishman in judging other cultures.

After *Anahuac*, Tylor published a few major works. *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865) elaborated the thesis that cultures past and present, civilized and “primitive,” must be studied as parts of a single history of human thought. Tylor’s fame, however, is based chiefly upon the publication of *Primitive Culture*. In it he again traced a progressive development from a “savage” to a civilized state and pictured primitive man as an early philosopher applying his reason to explain events in the human and natural world that were beyond his control, even though his scientific ignorance produced erroneous explanations. Tylor identified the earliest form of religious belief as “animism,” a belief in spiritual beings,

arrived at by primitive attempts to explain the difference between the living body and the corpse and the separation of soul and body in dreams.

Primitive Culture also elaborated upon a theme that became a central concept in his work: the relation of the life of primitive to that of modern populations. Thus, “culture,” he argued, should be studied not only in the artistic and spiritual achievements of civilizations but in human technological and moral accomplishments made at all stages of development. Tylor noted how customs and beliefs from a distant past seemed to have lived on into the modern world, and he became well-known for his examination of such “survivals,” a concept that he introduced. His evolutionary view of human development was endorsed by most of his colleagues and, of course, by Charles Darwin, who had established biological evolution as the key to human development. Tylor’s evolutionary theory was rejected by most scholars as both ethnocentric and purely conjectural by the close of the 20th century.

James George Frazer (1854–1941) – British anthropologist, folklorist, and classical scholar, best remembered as the author of *The Golden Bough* (1890). Frazer entered Trinity College, Cambridge (1874), and became a fellow (1879). In 1907 he was appointed professor of social anthropology at Liverpool, but he returned to Cambridge soon after and remained there for the rest of his life.



His outstanding position among anthropologists was established by the publication in 1890 of *The Golden Bough: a Study in Comparative Religion* (enlarged to 12 volumes from 1911–1915; abridged edition in one volume, 1922; and supplementary volume entitled *Aftermath* in 1936). The underlying theme of the work is Frazer’s theory of a general development of modes of thought from the magical to the religious and, finally, to the scientific. Although the evolutionary sequence of magical, religious, and scientific thought is no longer accepted and Frazer’s broad general psychological theory has proved unsatisfactory, his work enabled him to synthesize and compare a wider range of information about religious and magical practices than has been achieved subsequently by any other single anthropologist. His other works include *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910) and *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* (1918).

385 Wendy Doniger, *Miriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions*, pp. 678–79.

386 *Ibid.*

Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922–1996) – one of the most influential philosophers of science of the 20th century, perhaps the most influential. His 1962

book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is one of the most cited academic books of all time. Kuhn's contribution to the philosophy of science marked not only a break with several key positivist doctrines, but also inaugurated a new style of philosophy of science that brought it closer to the history of science. His account of the development of science held that science enjoys periods of stable growth punctuated by revisionary revolutions. To this thesis, Kuhn added the controversial "incommensurability thesis," that theories from differing periods suffer from certain deep kinds of failure of comparability.



Thomas Kuhn's academic life started in physics. He then switched to the history of science, and as his career developed he moved over to philosophy of science, although retaining a strong interest in the history of physics. In 1943, he graduated from Harvard. Thereafter he spent the remainder of the war years in research related to radar at Harvard and then in Europe. He gained his master's degree in physics in 1946, and his doctorate in 1949, also in physics (concerning an application of quantum mechanics to solid state physics). His initial bewilderment on reading the scientific work of Aristotle was a formative experience, followed as it was by a more or less sudden ability to understand Aristotle properly, undistorted by knowledge of subsequent science.

This led Kuhn to concentrate on the history of science and in due course he was appointed to an assistant professorship in general education and the history of science. During this period his work focussed on 18th-century matter theory and the early history of thermodynamics. Kuhn then turned to the history of astronomy, and in 1957 he published his first book, *The Copernican Revolution*. In 1961 Kuhn became a full professor at the University of California at Berkeley, having moved there in 1956 to take up a post in history of science, but in the philosophy department. This enabled him to develop his interest in the philosophy of science. In 1964 Kuhn left Berkeley to take up the position of M. Taylor Pyne Professor of Philosophy and History of Science at Princeton University (source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/thomas-kuhn/>).

- 387 **supervene** (verb) – to take place or occur as something additional or extraneous; to occur later than a specified or implied event or action, typically in such a way as to change the situation. In usage (as an adjective), for instance: *any plan that is made is liable to be disrupted by supervening events*. In philosophy (as of a fact or property), it means to be entailed by or consequent on the existence or establishment of another: *the view that mental events supervene upon physical ones*.

388 A.R. Lacey (editor), *A Dictionary of Philosophy, Third Edition*. (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 1996), pp. 262–64.

389 *Ibid.*, pp. 289–90.

electron – a fundamental particle, approximately $\frac{1}{1836}$ the size of a proton; spin $\frac{1}{2}$ fermion; stable against decay; no known size, assumed point-like; no known substructure; and a carrier of negative charge in matter, including electrical currents in conductors. Electrons together with the positively-charged nucleus form atoms. They were discovered by J.J. Thomson in 1897 through his study of cathode rays (now called electron beams) in electric and magnetic fields. The charge was determined by Robert Millikan in 1913. Wavelike properties are exhibited in electron diffraction. The electron is associated with weak nuclear force, as in radioactive beta decay, where the beta particle is the electron.

390 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 289–90.

The argument being discussed here reminds this writer of the late Muḥammad ‘Abduh and his explanation of *ṭayran abābil* in *Sūrah al-Fil* (105:3) in which he says that they are viruses and not airborne creatures as understood by others.

391 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 251–52.

George Edward Moore (1873–1958) – highly influential British philosopher of the early-20th century. His career was spent mainly at Cambridge University, where he taught alongside Bertrand Russell and, later, Ludwig Wittgenstein. The period of their overlap there has been called the “golden age” of Cambridge philosophy. Moore’s main contributions to philosophy were in the areas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and philosophical methodology. In epistemology, Moore is remembered as a stalwart defender of common-sense realism. Rejecting skepticism on the one hand, and, on the other, metaphysical theories that would invalidate the commonsense beliefs of “ordinary people” (non-philosophers), Moore articulated three different versions of a common-sense/realist epistemology over the course of his career.



Moore’s epistemological interests also motivated much of his metaphysical work, which to a large extent was focused on the ontology of cognition. In this regard, Moore was an important voice in the discussion about sense-data that dominated Anglo-American epistemology in the early-20th century.

In ethics, Moore is famous for driving home the difference between moral and non-moral properties, which he cashed-out in terms of the non-

natural and the natural. Moore's classification of the moral as non-natural was to be one of the hinges upon which moral philosophy in the Anglo-American academy turned until roughly 1960.

Moore's approach to philosophizing involved focusing on narrow problems and avoiding grand synthesis. His method was to scrutinize the meanings of the key terms in which philosophers expressed themselves while maintaining an implicit commitment to the ideals of clarity, rigor, and argumentation. This aspect of his philosophical style was sufficiently novel and conspicuous that many saw it as an innovation in philosophical methodology. In virtue of this, Moore, along with Bertrand Russell, is widely acknowledged as a founder of analytic philosophy, the kind of philosophy that has dominated the academy in Britain and the United States since roughly the 1930s.

Moore also had a significant influence outside of academic philosophy, through his contacts in the Cambridge Apostles and the Bloomsbury group. In both academic and non-academic spheres, Moore's influence was due in no small part to his exceptional personality and moral character (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/moore/>).

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872–1970) – 3rd Earl Russell; British philosopher, mathematician, and social reformer. In *Principia Mathematica* (1910–1913), he and A.N. Whitehead attempted to express all of mathematics in formal logic terms. He expounded logical atomism (the view that the world is “constructed” out of sense-data) in *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) and neutral monism (the view that the “ultimate stuff” of the world is neither mental nor physical but something “neutral” between the two) in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921). He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (1950).



During his late-30s and early-40s, Russell, like Pythagoras and Plato before him, believed that there existed a realm of truth that, unlike the messy contingencies of the everyday world of sense-experience, was immutable and eternal. This realm was accessible only to reason, and knowledge of it, once attained, was not tentative or corrigible but certain and irrefutable. Logic, for Russell, was the means by which one gained access to this realm, and thus the pursuit of logic was, for him, the highest and noblest enterprise life had to offer. Later in life, he retreated from this position.

Russell's contributions to logic, epistemology, and the philosophy of mathematics established him as one of the foremost philosophers of the 20th century. To the general public, however, he was best known as a campaigner for peace and as a popular writer on social, political, and moral subjects. During a long, productive, and often turbulent life, he published more than

70 books and about 2,000 articles, married four times, became involved in innumerable public controversies, and was honoured and reviled in almost equal measure throughout the world (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bertrand-Russell>).

392 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 251–52.

George Berkeley (1685–1753) – born in Ireland, he mainly stayed there, except for a few visits abroad, including one to America; he became bishop of Cloyne. He is considered one of the “British empiricists,” and his philosophy starts from John Locke’s “new way of ideas,” but rejects abstract ideas and the possibility of real existence outside perception. The slogan, *esse est percipi* (*to be is to be perceived*), sums up much of this philosophy, which is commonly known as *subjective idealism*, though he himself called it *immaterialism*. However, among percipients Berkeley included God.



393 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 205–09.

Stanisław Lesniewski (1886–1939) – philosopher and logician, born near Moscow, Russia; one of the principal founders and movers of the school of logic that flourished in Warsaw, Poland between the two world wars. He was the originator of an unorthodox system of the foundations of mathematics, based on three formal systems: Protothetic, a logic of propositions and their functions; Ontology, a logic of names, and functions of arbitrary order; and Mereology, a general theory of part and whole. His concern for utmost rigor in the formalization and execution of logic, coupled with a nominalistic rejection of abstract entities, led to a precise but highly unusual metalogic (the study of the metatheory of logic). His strictures on correctly distinguishing use from mention of expressions, his canons of correct definition, and his mereology, have all informed the logical mainstream, but the majority of his logical views and innovations have not been widely adopted. Despite this, his influence as a teacher and as a motor for logical innovation are widely acknowledged. He remains one of logic's most original figures (source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lesniewski/>).



394 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 205–09.

Heraclitus (535–475BCE) – refer to **Endnote 603** in Volume 8.

395 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 205–09.

396 Ibid.

Pythagoreanism – refer to **Endnote 625** in Volume 11.

397 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 205–09.

398 Ibid.

399 Ibid.

Rudolf Carnap (1891–1970) – German-born philosopher and naturalized US citizen; a leading exponent of logical positivism and one of the major philosophers of the 20th century. He made significant contributions to philosophy of science, philosophy of language, the theory of probability, inductive logic, and modal logic.



He rejected metaphysics as meaningless because metaphysical statements cannot be proved or disproved by experience. He asserted that many philosophical problems are indeed pseudo-problems, the outcome of a misuse of language. Some of them can be resolved when we recognize that they are not expressing matters of fact, but rather concern the choice between different linguistic frameworks. Thus the logical analysis of language becomes the principal instrument in resolving philosophical problems. Since ordinary language is ambiguous, Carnap asserted the necessity of studying philosophical issues in artificial languages, which are governed by the rules of logic and mathematics. In such languages, he dealt with the problems of the meaning of a statement, the different interpretations of probability, the nature of explanation, and the distinctions between analytic and synthetic, *a priori* and *a posteriori*, and necessary and contingent statements. Some of his written works include *Introduction to Semantics* (1942), *Formalization of Logic* (1943), *Meaning and Necessity: a Study in Semantics and Modal Logic* (1947), and *Philosophical Foundations of Physics* (1966). Other works were written in German (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/carnap/>).

David Hume (1711–1776) – Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist known especially for his philosophical empiricism and skepticism; born in Edinburgh and a leading figure of the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume conceived of philosophy as the inductive, experimental science of human nature. Taking the scientific method of the English physicist Isaac Newton as his model and building on the epistemology of the English

philosopher John Locke, Hume tried to describe how the mind works in acquiring what is called knowledge. He concluded that no theory of reality is possible; there can be no knowledge of anything beyond experience.

Part of Hume's fame and importance owes to his boldly skeptical approach to a range of philosophical subjects. In epistemology, he questioned common notions of personal identity, and argued that there is no permanent "self" that continues over time. He dismissed standard accounts of causality and argued that man's conceptions of cause-effect relations are grounded in habits of thinking, rather than in the perception of causal forces in the external world itself. He defended the skeptical position that human reason is inherently contradictory, and it is only through naturally-instilled beliefs that people can navigate their way through common life.

In the philosophy of religion, he argued that it is unreasonable to believe testimonies of alleged miraculous events, and he hints, accordingly, that people would reject religions that are founded on miracle testimonies. Against the common belief of the time that God's existence could be proven through a design or causal argument, Hume offered compelling criticisms of standard theistic proofs. He also advanced theories on the origin of popular religious beliefs, grounding such notions in human psychology rather than in rational argument or divine revelation. The larger aim of his critique was to disentangle philosophy from religion and thus allow philosophy to pursue its own ends without rational overextension or psychological corruption.

In moral theory, against the common view that God plays an important role in the creation and reinforcement of moral values, he offered one of the first purely secular moral theories, which grounded morality in the pleasing and useful consequences that result from human actions. He introduced the term *utility* into the philosophical vocabulary, and his theory is the immediate forerunner to the classic utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. He is famous for the position that *ought* cannot be derived from *is*, the view that statements of moral obligation cannot simply be deduced from statements of fact.

Hume also made important contributions to aesthetic theory with his view that there is a uniform standard of taste within human nature, in political theory with his critique of social contractarianism, and economic theory with his anti-mercantilist views. As a philosophical historian, he defended the conservative view that British governments are best run through a strong monarchy.

He studied at Edinburgh, took up law, and in 1734 went to La Fleche in Anjou, where he wrote his masterpiece, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), developing the empiricist legacy of Locke and Berkeley. To his distress, "...it fell dead-born from the Press," and his views became widely



known only when he wrote the two volumes of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1741–1742, first edition), and the abridgment of the treatise entitled *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), which provoked Kant and the idealists to counter Hume’s empiricism and skepticism. His atheism probably thwarted his applications for professorships at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1777) was prudently only published posthumously. In 1752 he became Keeper of the Advocates’ Library in Edinburgh, and achieved real fame with his popular *Political Discourses* (1752) and the monumental *History of England* (1754–1762) (source: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hume/>).

400 A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, pp. 205–09.

401 Ibid.

402 Dr. Mark H. Beers et al. (editors), *The Merck Manual of Medical Information, Second Home Edition*. (West Point, Pennsylvania, USA: Merck & Co., Inc., 2003), pp. 467–68.

403–406 Ibid.

407 Joel Krieger (editor-in-chief), *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 739–40.

408–417 Ibid.

418 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 366.

419 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster’s New World Encyclopedia*, p. 88.

420 Ibid., p. 1127.

421 Ibid., p. 1166.

422 Ibid., p. 408.

423 Ibid., p. 358.

424 Ibid., p. 869.

425 Jeremy Kingston and David Lambert, *Catastrophe and Crisis*. (London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Books, 1991), pp. 132–35.

426–433 Ibid.

434 Ibid., pp. 170–77.

435 Ibid.

436 Ibid.

437 Ibid.

inflation – an economic situation of widespread and persistent increases in prices and wages. Common measures of inflation are the retail price index, which covers a wide range of consumer goods, and the gross domestic product deflator, an index of all goods prices. Inflation is believed to be bad for both equity and efficiency. If interest rates do not rise, inflation injures savers; if interest rates do rise, the need for high payments early in the life of loans makes borrowing for business or for house ownership very risky.

Economists differ over the cause of inflation; the main models blame excess demands and excessive pay rises in the money supply. Cost inflation, in which each price or wage rate rises because others have risen, or are expected to rise, does not explain how inflation starts, but does explain why it is so persistent once it has started. Under very rapid inflation, or hyperinflation (for example, Germany in the 1920s or some Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s), money becomes useless and the economy is forced back to barter, with great losses of efficiency. Governments have often tried to cure inflation, frequently incurring unemployment in the process, without much success.

438 Jeremy Kingston, *Catastrophe and Crisis*, pp. 170–77.

439 Ibid.

440 Ibid.

441 Ibid.

stock market – the system of buying and selling stocks and shares; also, a building in which these transactions take place (the stock exchange). A stock market “crash” refers to a situation when the prices of stocks fall dramatically, resulting in many bankruptcies. The most famous case was the Wall Street Crash of 1929; a less dramatic crash also occurred in October 1987 in most world stock markets, but a seismic one, close in severity to the one in 1929, occurred in September–October 2008.

Stock Market Crash of 2008 – “We take a buck, we shoot it full of steroids and we call it leverage” (Gordon Gekko from the Hollywood film, *Wall Street II*). On September 29, 2008, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (a register of Zio-American financial greed) fell 777.68 points in intra-day trading — the largest point drop in any single day in US history. It plummeted ostensibly because the US Congress rejected the bank bailout bill (read that: the Congress feared, due to a backlash from its public constituency, to appropriate the future earnings of the American worker in order to subsidize the gambling debts of rapacious Wall Street banksters). But the crash had been building for a long time. The Dow hit its pre-recession high on October 9, 2007, closing at 14,164.43. Less than 18 months later, it had dropped more than 50% to 6,443.27 on March 6, 2009 (that was not the largest decline in history; during the Great Depression, the stock market dropped 90% — but that took three years).^a

The 2008 stock market crash destroyed \$16.4 trillion of American households’ net worth from 2007–2009. It wiped out more than \$2 trillion of Americans’ retirement savings. During that time, the Dow hit these gloomy milestones:

- the biggest ever single-day crash in Dow Jones history occurred on September 29, 2008, when the US House of Representatives rejected the government’s \$700 billion bank bailout;
- the Dow dropped 777.68 points (6.98%) — obliterating \$1.2 trillion in market value;
- the index’s second biggest single-day loss happened just six days later on October 15, 2008 — this time, recession talk fueled the 7.9% decline;
- subprime financial crisis-related events that triggered the top two largest single-day Dow drops also accounted for the fourth, fifth, and tenth largest single-day crashes in Dow history, all occurring in 2008; and
- the Dow crashed 18.1% the week of October 6, 2008, alone.

Analysts who look to gain something of value for future policymakers in deciphering the causes of such meltdowns suggest that, not unlike the stock market crash of 1929 and the dot-com crash of 2000–2002, the 2008 stock market crash, boiled down, to a speculative bubble (that is, the out-of-control gambling of Wall Street bookies with their clients’ assets). In 1929, it was speculation over the railroad industry; in 2000, it was speculation over internet companies; and in 2008, it was speculation over real estate.

From 1996–2006, home prices nearly doubled. Robert Shiller’s Home Price Index went from 87.0 to 160.6. About 65% of this growth occurred from 2002 to peak prices in 2006. When the bubble burst, home prices quickly plunged. The index was at 105.7 by 2009. This surge in growth followed by rapid decline was unprecedented in the history of US real housing prices, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. The factors below fueled the run-up in housing prices:

- in the aftermath of the dot-com crash, investors turned away from technologies to real estate as an investment alternative;
- the low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve in the 1990s and 2000s provided further incentive for home buying; and
- relaxed lending standards helped to increase demand even when prices reached levels that most people could not otherwise have afforded.

Building up to the start of the collapse in 2007, the subprime mortgage industry was thriving. Individuals with poor credit were given access to loans they really could not afford. Historically, less than 8% of home loans given out annually were subprime loans. But from 2004–2006, that rate ran up to roughly 20%, with much higher rates in certain parts of the country.^b Meanwhile, to compound the potential mortgage risk, US households became increasingly indebted. Total consumer debt, in general, continued to grow at an astonishing rate and in 2004, it hit \$2 trillion for the first time. The ratio of debt to disposable personal income almost doubled from 77% in 1990 to 127% by the end of 2007. Howard S. Dvorkin, president and founder of Consolidated Credit Counseling Services Inc., a nonprofit debt management organization, said at the time, “It’s a huge problem. You cannot be the wealthiest country in the world and have all your countrymen be up to their neck in debt.”

Nonetheless (in the years before the bubble burst), so long as home prices were on the rise, these poor (predatory) lending practices continued and were simply ignored. Lenders could afford to write bad loans as long as the homeowner’s equity outpaced their desire for new debt. If borrowers were to fail to pay back their loans, lenders could always foreclose on the home, since it was an asset with ever-increasing value. The credit market’s problems began when housing prices started to fall in 2007. Homeowners frequently found themselves with underwater loans. They owed lenders more than the home was worth. When faced with these facts, homeowners no longer feared the threat of foreclosure. Even more disturbing was the fact that some families abandoned their homes, choosing to start their lives anew elsewhere rather than worry about paying off their debts.^c

During the run-up in housing prices, the mortgage-backed securities (MBS) market became popular with commercial investors. An MBS is a pool of mortgages grouped into a single security (that is, *ribā* on amphetamines). Investors benefit from the premiums and *ribā* payments on the individual mortgages it contains. This market is highly profitable as long as home prices continue to rise and homeowners continue to make their mortgage payments. The risks, however, became all too real as housing prices began to plummet and homeowners began to default on their mortgages in droves.

Another investment vehicle invented by the vulturous brain trust on Wall Street during this time was the credit derivative, known as a credit de-

fault swap (CDS). CDSs were designed to be a method of hedging (a calculated risk that essentially boils down to a crap shoot) against a company's creditworthiness, similar to insurance. But unlike the insurance market, the CDS market was unregulated, meaning there was no requirement that the issuers of CDS contracts maintain enough money in reserve to pay out under a worst-case scenario (such as an economic downturn). This was exactly what happened with American International Group (AIG) in early-2008 as it announced huge losses in its portfolio of underwritten CDS contracts that it could not afford to pay up on.

By March 2007, with the failure of Bear Stearns (a New York-based global investment bank, securities trading and brokerage firm) due to huge losses resulting from its involvement in having underwritten many of the investment vehicles directly linked to the subprime mortgage market, it became evident that the entire subprime lending market was in trouble. Homeowners were defaulting at high rates as all of the creative variations of subprime mortgages (casino banking) were resetting to higher payments while home prices declined. Homeowners were upside down — they owed more on their mortgages than their homes were worth — and could no longer just flip their way out of their homes when the new, higher payments had become unaffordable. Instead, they lost their homes to foreclosure and often filed for bankruptcy in the process.

On Sunday, September 7, 2008, with the financial markets down nearly 20% from the October 2007 peaks, the government announced its takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (US government-sponsored mortgage enterprises) as a result of losses from heavy exposure to the collapsing subprime mortgage market. One week later, on September 14, major investment firm Lehman Brothers succumbed to its own overexposure to the subprime mortgage market (that is, to its own insatiable greed and gambling) and announced the largest bankruptcy filing in US history at that time. The next day, markets plummeted, and the Dow closed down 499 points at 10,917.

The collapse of Lehman cascaded, resulting in the net asset value of the Reserve Primary Fund falling below \$1/share on September 16, 2008. Investors then were informed that for every \$1 invested, they were entitled to only 97¢. This loss was due to the holding of commercial paper issued by Lehman and was only the second time in US history that a money-market fund's share value had "broken the buck." Panic ensued in the money-market fund industry, resulting in massive redemption requests (euphemism for the ordinary investor realizing he was going to lose everything he had — even his retirement funds and home).

On the same day, the Bank of America announced that it was buying Merrill Lynch, the nation's largest brokerage company. Additionally AIG, one of the nation's leading financial companies, had its credit downgraded as a result of having underwritten more credit derivative contracts than it

could afford to pay off. On September 18, 2008, talk of a government bailout began, sending the Dow up 410 points. The next day, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson proposed that a Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) of as much as \$1 trillion be made available to buy up toxic debt to ward off a complete financial meltdown. Also on this day, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) initiated a temporary ban on short-selling the stocks of financial companies, believing this would stabilize the markets. The markets surged on the news and investors sent the Dow up 456 points to an intraday high of 11,483, finally closing up 361 at 11,388. These highs would prove to be of historical importance as the financial markets were about to undergo three weeks of complete turmoil.^d

All of what happened in the United States, basically the financial nexus of the (predatory part of the) world, would necessarily have its impact on the rest of the world, leading to a recession not only in European financial and corporate markets, but also as far as China, where the reverberations were felt in that European and American consumers would no longer have the disposable capital to buy Chinese manufactured products. This is what provided a shot in the arm for the Chinese policy to curtail dependence on the instability of foreign speculated markets by increasing its own domestic consumption.

- a Kimberly Amadeo, *Stock Market Crash of 2008*. (New York, New York: The Balance website, April 3, 2017).
(<https://www.thebalance.com/stock-market-crash-of-2008-3305535>)
- b A subprime mortgage is a type of home loan given to individuals with poor credit ratings. Typically these individuals would be unable to qualify for traditional mortgages. Due to the higher risk these borrowers present to banks, the banks charge increased interest rates above the prime lending rate.
- c Tara Clarke, *2008 Stock Market Crash Causes and Aftermath*. (Baltimore, Maryland, USA: Money Morning website, June 26, 2015).
(<https://moneymorning.com/2015/06/26/2008-stock-market-crash-causes-and-aftermath/>)
- d Paul Kosakowski, *The Fall of the Market in the Fall of 2008*. (New York, New York: Investopedia website, May 8, 2017).
(<http://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/09/subprime-market-2008.asp>)

443–445 Ibid.

446 Ibid.

Charles Edwin Mitchell (1877–1955) – American banker and chairman of the National City organization, which oversaw investments for the National City Bank. After the collapse of the stock market in 1929, Mitchell became a major target for government investigations. He left his posts at National City when it was disclosed that he had made illegal stock transactions, speculated in his own bank’s securities, and engaged in income tax evasion.



The passage of the Securities Act of 1933 and the Banking Acts of 1933 and 1935 was largely in response to Mitchell’s financial trickery. After resigning from the National City organization, Mitchell founded his own financial consulting firm, C.E. Mitchell, Inc. At the same time, he assumed the position of chairman of the board for the investment banking firm of Blyth & Co (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-E-Mitchell>).

447 Jeremy Kingston, *Catastrophe and Crisis*, pp. 170–77.

448 Ibid.

449 Ibid.

Richard Whitney (1888–1974) – American financier and president of the New York Stock Exchange (1930–1935). He was later convicted of embezzlement and imprisoned. In August 1941, Whitney emerged from prison at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York, on parole after serving three years of a 5–10-year sentence for grand larceny. Whitney had stolen from the New York Yacht Club and from Harvard (where, as a member of the class of 1911, he had rowed for the crew team); from his wife’s family estate; as well as from the widows and children who depended on the Stock Exchange Gratuity Fund, of which he was trustee.



He was once hailed as the “Great White Knight” of Wall Street. At the start of the terrifying market plunge of October 1929, he had helped shore up the market by parading around the exchange floor, placing bids for shares of US Steel, as well as other blue-chip holdings. Intrigued that his Harvard schoolmate Joseph P. Kennedy (father of US President John F. Kennedy), who had followed him by a year, had made millions selling Gordon’s Dry Gin and Haig & Haig Scotch during Prohibition, Whitney tried bootlegging Jersey

Lightning applejack and Canadian rye, while Prohibition was on the way out in 1933. But these and other “business” gambits failed, and Whitney started his secret life of crime. After parole, Whitney lived for decades in New Jersey with his wife, serving as treasurer for a friend’s dairy and dabbling in other small ventures before his death in 1974 at the age of 86 (source: <https://www.ny-times.com/2014/09/14/upshot/from-white-knight-to-thief.html>).

450 Jeremy Kingston, *Catastrophe and Crisis*, pp. 170–77.

451 Ibid.

452 Ibid.

453 Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*. (New York, New York: The New Press, 1970), p. 29–30.

454 Jeremy Kingston, *Catastrophe and Crisis*, pp. 170–77.

455–457 Ibid.

458 Ibid.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882–1945) – refer to **Endnote 518** in Volume 8 for biographical information.

459 Jeremy Kingston, *Catastrophe and Crisis*, pp. 170–77.

New Deal – the administration and policies of US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (ruled, 1933–1945), who pledged a “new deal” for the country during the campaign of 1932. He embarked on active state economic involvement to combat the Great Depression, setting the tone in a hectic “first hundred days.” Although some early legislation was invalidated by the Supreme Court, the New Deal left a lasting impact on US government, economy, and society, not least by the effective creation of the modern institution of the presidency. Major specific initiatives included the National Industrial Recovery Act (1933), the Tennessee Valley Authority (1933), the Agricultural Adjustment Act (1933), the National Youth Administration (1935), the National Labor Relations Act (1935), and the Social Security Act (1935). Historians often distinguish the first New Deal (1933–1934), concerned primarily with restarting and stabilizing the economy, from the second New Deal (1935–1939), aimed at social reform. From 1940 onward, Roosevelt was primarily concerned with foreign affairs.

460 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 702–04.

461–463 Ibid.

464 Ibid.

Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St. Alban (1561–1626) – philosopher and statesman, born in London. He studied at Cambridge and Gray’s Inn, was called to the bar in 1582, and became an MP in 1584. He was knighted by James I in 1603 for his services, and enjoyed an outstanding political and legal career, culminating as Lord Chancellor (1618) and Viscount St. Alban in 1621. However, in 1621, he was publicly accused of corruption, fined a huge sum, imprisoned, and banished from parliament and the court. He never returned to public office, and died deeply in debt. He was later anatomized by Alexander Pope as “the brightest, wisest, meanest of mankind.” His philosophy and thought is best studied in his *Essays* (1597), *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) and *Novum Organum* (1620). His stress on experimentation and inductive methods gave strong impetus to subsequent scientific investigation.



Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte (Count) de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) – often referred to as **Henri de Saint-Simon**; social reformer, the founder of French socialism, born in Paris. He served in the American War of Independence, and during the French Revolution was imprisoned as an aristocrat. His writing was a reaction against the savagery of the revolutionary period, and proclaimed a brotherhood of man in which science and technology would become a new spiritual authority, as in *Du système industriel* (*On the Industrial System*, 1821) and *Nouveau christianisme* (*New Christianity*, 1825).



465 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 702–04.

Bolsheviks – Russian for *majority-ites*, members of the hard-line faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labor party, formed by Lenin at the party’s second congress in 1903; forerunner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (abolished in 1991). In October 1917, the Bolsheviks led the revolution in Petrograd that established the first Soviet government.

Stalinism – the means of governing and related policies implemented by Joseph Stalin. Stalinist policies in the Soviet Union included rapid industri-

alization, the theory of socialism in one country, a centralized state, collectivization of agriculture, cult of personality, and subordination of interests of foreign communist parties to those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union — deemed by Stalinism to be the most forefront vanguard party of communist revolution at the time.

Stalinism promoted the escalation of class conflict, utilizing state violence to forcibly purge society of claimed supporters of the bourgeoisie, regarding them as threats to the pursuit of the communist revolution that resulted in substantial political violence and persecution of such people. These included not only bourgeois people but also working-class people accused of counter-revolutionary sympathies.

Stalinist industrialization was officially designed to accelerate the development toward communism, stressing that such rapid industrialization was needed because the country was previously economically backward in comparison with other countries; and that it was needed in order to face the challenges posed by internal and external enemies of communism. Rapid industrialization was accompanied with mass collectivization of agriculture and rapid urbanization. Rapid urbanization converted many small villages into industrial cities (source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism>).

Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) – refer to **Endnote 390** in Volume 7 and **Endnote 301** in Volume 10.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924) – refer to **Endnote 348** in Volume 7 and **Endnote 541** in Volume 8.

466 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 702–04.

Employment Act of 1946 (United States) – during the last year of WWII (1945), the US Congress worked on legislation to avert what many feared would be a post-war depression. It was widely believed that heavy military spending had been the main cure for the economic collapse of the 1930s, and that without stimulus from the federal government millions of American soldiers would be returning home to a country without jobs or opportunities. The Employment Act of 1946 declared it to be the continuing policy and responsibility of the federal government to use all practicable means “to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power.” The statute required the president to submit an annual economic report, created the Council of Economic Advisers to assist the president with that task, and established the Joint Economic Committee in Congress to study the means needed to further the policy of the statute.

John Maynard Keynes, the noted economist, rejecting the traditional assumption that the capitalist system was self-adjusting, advocated govern-

ment intervention to preserve existing economic forms and individual initiative. Below is an excerpt from the act,

The Congress hereby declares that it is the continuing policy and responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means consistent with its needs and obligations and other essential considerations of national policy, with the assistance and cooperation of industry, agriculture, labor, and State and local governments... for the purpose of creating and maintaining, in a manner calculated to foster and promote free competitive enterprise and the general welfare, conditions under which there will be afforded useful employment opportunities, including self-employment, for those able, willing, and seeking to work, and to promote maximum employment, production, and purchasing power (source: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/employment-act-1946>).

467 John Dewey, *Intelligence in the Modern World*. “The Economic Basis of the New Society,” (New York, New York: The Modern Library, 1939).

John Dewey (1859–1952) – US philosopher who believed that the exigencies of a democratic and industrial society demanded new educational techniques. He expounded his ideas in numerous writings, including *School and Society* (1899), and founded a progressive school in Chicago. A pragmatist thinker, influenced by William James, Dewey maintained that there is only the reality of experience and made “inquiry” the essence of logic. He was born in Vermont and from 1904 was professor of philosophy at Columbia University, New York.



468 Eugene V. Rostow, *Planning for Freedom*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1959).

469 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 702–04.

470 Ibid.

Cold War (1947–1991) – see **Endnotes 278, 289**, and 317 in Volume 5; pp. 210 and 347, and Endnotes 379 and 390 in Volume 7; and pp. 165–66, 206–07, and 335 in Volume 9.

471 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 702–04.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) – specialized agency of the United Nations, headquartered in Washington, DC, and established under the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement and operational since 1947. It seeks to promote international monetary cooperation and the growth of world trade, and to smooth multilateral payment arrangements among member states. IMF standby loans are available to members in balance-of-payments difficulties (the amount being governed by the member's quota), usually on the basis of acceptance of instruction on stipulated corrective measures.



The Fund also operates other drawing facilities, including several designed to provide preferential credit to developing countries with liquidity problems. Having previously operated in US dollars lined to gold, since 1972 the IMF has used the special drawing right (SDR) as its standard unit of account, valued in terms of a weighted "basket" of major currencies. Since the 1971 Smithsonian agreement permitting wider fluctuations from specified currency parities, IMF rules have been progressively adapted to the increasing prevalence of fully floating exchange rates.

World Bank – popular name for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development specialized agency of the United Nations that borrows in the commercial market and lends on commercial terms. It was established in 1945 under the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement, which also created the IMF. The International Development Association is an arm of the World Bank.



The World Bank now earns almost as much money from usury and loan repayments as it hands out in new loans every year. Over 60% of the bank's loans go to suppliers outside the borrower countries for such things as consultancy services, oil, and machinery. Control of the bank is vested in a board of executives representing national governments, whose votes are apportioned according to the amount they have funded the bank. Thus the US has nearly 20% of the vote and always appoints the board's president. In 1989 the World Bank made a net transfer of \$42.9 billion to developing countries.

472 According to Jewish historical sources, Abraham (Abram) is the biblical patriarch to whom both the Jewish people and many Arabian tribes trace their ancestry. According to the biblical account, he was the son of Terah and the father of Isaac (by Sarah) and Ishmael (by his "concubine" Hagar). He left his birthplace of Ūr of the Chaldees and pitched his tent among the Canaanite and Philistine inhabitants of Palestine, visited Egypt, and

returned to dwell in Hebron. He fought to deliver Lot from Chedorlaomer (king of Elam), Amraphel (king of Shinar), and their allies.

God appeared to him in a vision and promised that his seed would inherit the land “from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates,” made a covenant with him, and tested his loyalty by ordering the sacrifice of Isaac. On the death of his wife Sarah, Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah as a family burial place. He married a second wife, Keturah. Abraham died at the age of 175 and was buried in the cave of Machpelah.

According to tradition, Abraham (ﷺ) was the founder of monotheism (being called a “prophet” in Genesis 20:7), while later legends refer to him as the repository of all wisdom and science. He is the prototype of humility and kindness, famed for his hospitality. Circumcision is spoken of as “the Covenant of Abraham our Father,” and Abraham is pictured as sitting at the gates of Hell not allowing any circumcised Jew to be brought there. According to hellenistic legends, he was king of Damascus. In Arabian history, he was the one who laid the foundations for the sanctuary at Makkah. Modern biblical research is inclined to maintain his historical integrity. It is generally believed that he lived at the beginning of the second millennium BCE.

473 **Ūr** – also known as **Ūru**, **Ūri**, **Ūrim**, or **Ūr Kasdim**, meaning “**Ūr of the Chaldees**”; important Babylonian city on the lower Euphrates River, from which Abraham’s family emigrated to Haran. It lay about 150 miles from the head of the Persian Gulf in present-day Iraq. The city was inhabited from approximately 4000–500BCE and reached the peak of its riches and influence in about 2600BCE. The phrase “Ūr of the Chaldees” occurs four times in the Old Testament. It gives rise to scholarly questions of priestly editing in the Old Testament, since the word for *Chaldees* is not used elsewhere until the ninth century.



of the Chaldees” occurs four times in the Old Testament. It gives rise to scholarly questions of priestly editing in the Old Testament, since the word for *Chaldees* is not used elsewhere until the ninth century.

After 75 years of preliminary exploration, serious archaeology began at Ūr in 1922, under Leonard Woolley, for the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania. Ūr yielded valuable artifacts and texts from the life of the ancient Near East, especially in the age of the patriarchs (the era of the three biblical patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – ﷺ). The excavations revealed harbors along the river, storehouses, private houses, palaces, a huge ziggurat surmounted by a temple, and hundreds of valuable artifacts in gold, jewelry, and ivory. The base of the three-storied step pyramid, a ziggurat, was about the size of a football field. The walls were of dried brick,

but faced with fired brick. From the uppermost courtyard rose a temple to the moon god Nanna, also known as Sin. A long, open stairway, not unlike some seen among the Inca and Aztec ruins, rose directly through the three levels of the ziggurat. A huge gate at the first level was later converted into a separate place of worship. Raised platforms probably at one time contained images of the moon god and his companion gods. A vast network of other rooms supported the temple complex — kitchens, workshops, and storerooms.

Perhaps the most revealing discoveries at Ūr relate to Sumerian burial customs of the period 2700–2500BCE. For example in the tomb of Shubad (not a queen but certainly a noblewoman) are buried 74 of her attendants. Apparently they followed her voluntarily into death, probably by taking poison. In this and other tombs were found fully outfitted soldiers, charioteers, musicians, grooms, dressers, courtiers, and cooks. Evidence for the burial of living attendants has not been found elsewhere in the Near East, but is born out by an ancient Sumerian poem, the Gilgamesh Epic.

The leading role of Ūr in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley continued to decline gradually over the centuries, after its heyday in the time of the moon god. The major temples were partially restored by Nebuchadnezzar about 1700BCE and again by Cyrus the Great about 535BCE.

474 **Terah** – father of Abraham according to the Old Testament. He left Ūr of the Chaldees to travel to the land of Canaan with his son and nephew, Lot, but on the way they settled in Haran where Terah died. The *Aggadāh* (a compendium of rabbinic texts that incorporates folklore, historical anecdotes, moral exhortations, and practical advice in various spheres, from business to medicine) depicts Terah as a devout idolator challenged in his beliefs by Abraham (ﷺ).

475 **Wahb ibn Munabbih Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Yamānī al-Ṣan‘ānī** (circa 34–110AH) – storyteller from Yemen, originally of Persian descent. He is celebrated for his *Book of the Military Campaigns*, describing the Prophet’s military engagements. He was also an authority on the traditions of Jews and Christians.

Ka‘b al-Aḥbār (died 32AH) – a Yemeni Jew who converted to Islam during the *khilāfah* of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; considered the oldest authority on Judaism-Islamic traditions. Refer also to **Endnote 576** in Volume 11.

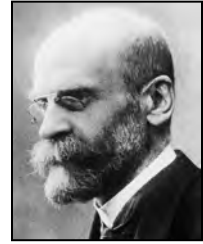
476 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Idrīs and ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, and recorded by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī and al-Bukhārī.

لما نزلت هذه الآية "الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ . . ." شقَّ ذلك على أصحاب النبي ﷺ . وقالوا "أَبْنَا لَمْ يظلم نفسَه؟" فقال رسول الله ﷺ "ليس كما تظنون . إنما هو كما قال لقمان لابنه يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ."

477 Wendy Doniger, *Miriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions*, p. 916.

Marx's well-known statement, "Religion is the opium of the people," circulated like wildfire in the 20th century, but today, dissatisfied with the "progress" associated with dialectical materialism and secularism, people are having second thoughts.

(David) Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) – sociologist, moral philosopher, social philosopher. Durkheim paid particular attention to the matter of religion, which he regarded as an activity rather than adherence to a set of dogmas, and as another collective representation of the social group in which it was practiced. On Durkheim's account the most fundamental feature of primitive religion is totemism. A totem, in most cases an animal or plant, is regarded as sacred by a particular social group, usually a tribe or clan, as it is a symbol of their object of worship. In turn, this object is, in reality, but unbeknownst to its worshipers, the objectification of the social group itself. The system of beliefs and practices of religion is thus the representation of a society by its own members, and has a functional value as the fulfillment of the needs of that society. These two features led Durkheim to take issue with those previous analyses that considered all religion as false, and to state his theory of truth: he regarded all such systems as true, precisely because they are expressions of a social reality and have a social function.



Durkheim considered that religion provided suitable conditions for the origins and development of all intellectual activity, including science. Scientific activity owed to religion the intellectual categories of space, time, force, and necessity that, as religion itself is a coercive social representation, are reflections of the unacknowledged necessities of a social group. The alleged antagonism between the two activities is not, according to Durkheim, a necessary feature of their interrelationship. Since religion, like all other social phenomena, is dynamic, he accepted the possibility that new forms of religion might arise in the future. Although Durkheim was not overtly hostile to religion, his account contains an implicit rejection of the view that the object of at least some religious worship is a transcendent reality. Refer also to Endnote 38 in Volume 4, **Endnote 151** in Volume 6, and **Endnote 341** in Volume 10.

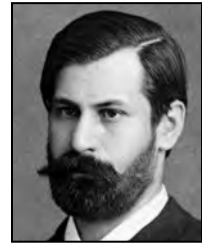
Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) – progenitor of psychoanalysis. Religious leaders were among the loudest of Freud's detractors. In earlier works, Freud referred to religion as a neurosis, finding similarities between the rituals of organized faiths and the compulsive behaviors of neurotic patients. By 1933, Freud had written *Totem and Taboo*, in which he examined anthropologists'

research on remote pagan cultures and compared their views to modern Christianity; and *The Future of an Illusion*, in which he most forcefully made his case that religion was a kind of mass neurosis.

Although for more than 20 years Freud had argued that religion could be analyzed like a human neurosis, it was not until 1934 that Catholic Church authorities took notice of psychoanalysis and censored psychoanalytic works. Offending the Catholic Church at that time was problematic, as the Church's power in Freud's native Austria counterbalanced the nationalistic impulses of Nazism. In 1934, Pope Pius XI forced an Italian psychoanalytical journal to stop publishing, and he released a statement in which he expressed his disagreement with Freud's ideas, especially regarding religious belief.

Freud feared that the Church would suppress his profession altogether. In a letter to a friend, Freud wrote, "One cannot publish this formula [psychoanalytic theory] without running the risk of the Catholic authorities forbidding the practice of analysis." This would have meant more than mere censorship. By the mid-1930s, psychoanalysts had just begun to gain international respectability among scientists and the general public and the Church's ban would have constituted a huge setback for the whole discipline. In response to his fear of a backlash against psychoanalysis, Freud delayed publishing *Moses and Monotheism*, a book on his analysis of the story of Moses and the birth of Judaism, until 1939, after he had left Austria and the Nazi menace, and was safely in England. Freud's books were among the 25,000 volumes written by Jewish authors that were burned by the Nazis in Germany in May 1933. "Against the soul-destroying glorification of the instinctual life, for the nobility of the soul! I consign to the flames the writings of the school of Sigmund Freud," read the declaration announced at the book burning.

The Catholic Church viewed Freud's *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917) as especially dangerous because of its widespread popularity. Written in an easygoing style and translated into 16 languages, it used examples from everyday life to explain Freud's complex theories. Freud's idea that sexual activity was natural, though a breeding ground for neuroses, was interpreted as advocating free sexuality and following one's impulses. Traditional moralists looked at Freud as just another manifestation of the moral decay brought on by Darwinism and scientific rationality in general. Freud's writings were considered off-limits to Catholics according to canon law, a general prohibition of works that by their nature were considered dangerous to faith or morals. In *What Is the Index?*, a guide for American Catholics published in 1952, readers were advised according to canon law provisions against reading Freud's *Origins and Development of Psychoanalysis* as part of a national Great Books program.



Although the first translation of Freud’s writings was into Russian and after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet government recognized psychoanalysis as a science and awarded its practitioners state funds. Freud’s works were banned from bookstores and libraries under Joseph Stalin in 1930 as bourgeois ideology. They circulated only in bootleg editions until the mid-1980s. Refer also to **Endnote 43** in Volume 2, **Endnote 19** in Volume 4, **Endnote 51** in Volume 6, **Endnote 344** in Volume 10, and Endnote 635 in Volume 11.

478 Wendy Doniger, *Miriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions*, p. 916.

479 Ibid., p. 1087.

480–485 Ibid.

486 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’ān*, Volume 2, p. 1149.

487 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by al-Kalbī.

في رواية عن ابن عباس أنه عبد الله بن سعد بن أبي سرح . وكان أسلم وكتب الوحي لرسول الله ﷺ وأنه لما نزلت الآية التي في سورة المؤمنون "ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من سلالة من طين . . ." دعاه النبي ﷺ فأملأها عليه فلما انتهى إلى قوله "ثم أنشأناه خلقا آخر . . ." عجب عبد الله في تفصيل خلق الإنسان فقال "تبارك الله أحسن الخالقين." فقال رسول الله ﷺ "هكذا أنزلت علي." فثبك عبد الله حينئذ وقال "لئن كان محمد صادقا لقد أوحى إلي كما أوحى إليه. ولئن كان كاذبا لقد قلت كما قال!" فارتد عن الإسلام . ولحق بالمشركين.

488 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, pp. 480, 993.

489 Ibid., p. 424.

490 Ibid., p. 500.

491 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*. (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), p. 218.

492–493 Ibid.

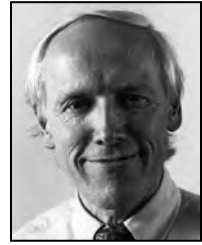
494 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 443.

495 Ibid.

496 Nicholas Wade, *How Did Life Begin?* (New York, New York: New York Times, Science section, November 11, 2003). (<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/11/science/how-did-life-begin.html>)

497 Ibid.

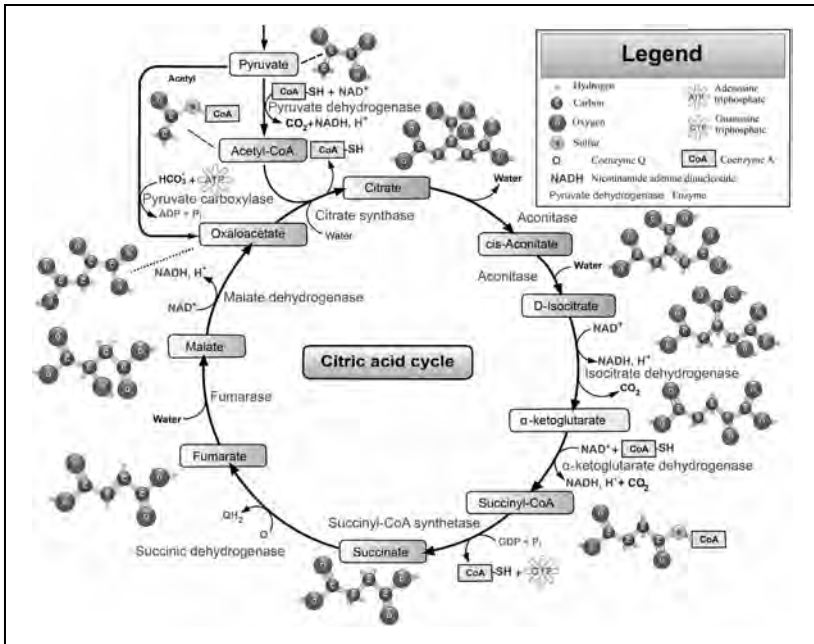
Gunter Wächtershäuser (1938–present) – a German chemist turned patent lawyer; mainly known for his work on the origin of life, and in particular his iron-sulfur world theory, a theory that life on Earth had hydrothermal origins. The theory is consistent with the hypothesis that life originated near seafloor hydrothermal vents. He has published numerous articles in organic chemistry, genetic engineering, and patent law, and has made contributions to evolutionary theory concerning the origins of perception and cognition, and the origin of life. One of the key ideas advanced by Wächtershäuser is that an early form of metabolism predated genetics. Metabolism here means a cycle of chemical reactions that produce energy in a form that can be harnessed by other processes. The idea is that once a primitive metabolic cycle was established, it began to produce ever more complex compounds (source: https://www.revolvy.com/topic/G%C3%BCnter%20W%C3%A4chtersh%C3%A4user&item_type=topic).



498 Nicholas Wade, *How Did Life Begin?* (New York Times, November 11, 2003).

tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA cycle) – also known as the **Krebs cycle** and the **citric acid cycle**, it is the second stage of cellular respiration, the three-stage process by which living cells break down organic fuel molecules in the presence of oxygen to harvest the energy they need to grow and divide. This metabolic process occurs in most plants, animals, fungi, and many bacteria. In all organisms except bacteria the TCA cycle is carried out in the matrix of intracellular structures called mitochondria. The TCA cycle plays a central role in the breakdown, or catabolism, of organic fuel molecules — that is, glucose and some other sugars, fatty acids, and some amino acids. Before these rather large molecules can enter the TCA cycle they must be degraded into a two-carbon compound called acetyl coenzyme A (acetyl CoA). Once fed into the TCA cycle, acetyl CoA is converted into carbon dioxide and energy.

The TCA cycle consists of eight steps catalyzed by eight different enzymes (see illustration). Energy is produced in a number of steps in this cycle of reactions. In step 5, one molecule of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the molecule that powers most cellular functions, is produced. Most of the energy obtained from the TCA cycle, however, is captured by the compounds nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺) and flavin adenine dinucleotide (FAD) and converted later to ATP. Energy transfers occur through the relay of electrons from one substance to another, a process carried out through the chemical reactions known as oxidation and reduction, or redox reactions



(oxidation involves the loss of electrons from a substance whereas reduction involves the gain of electrons.) For each turn of the TCA cycle, three molecules of NAD^+ are reduced to NADH and one molecule of FAD is reduced to FADH_2 . These molecules then transfer their energy to the electron transport chain, a pathway that is part of the third stage of cellular respiration. The electron transport chain in turn releases energy so that it can be converted to ATP through the process of oxidative phosphorylation.

The German-born British biochemist Hans Adolf Krebs proposed this cycle, which he called the citric acid cycle, in 1937. For his work he received the 1953 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Although Krebs elucidated most of the reactions in this pathway, there were some gaps in his design. The discovery of coenzyme A in 1945 by Fritz Lipmann and Nathan Kaplan allowed researchers to work out the cycle of reactions as it is known today (source: <https://www.britannica.com/science/tricarboxylic-acid-cycle>).

499 Nicholas Wade, *How Did Life Begin?* (New York Times, November 11, 2003).

Thomas Robert Cech (1947–present) – American biochemist and molecular biologist who, with **Sidney Altman**, was awarded the 1989 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for their independent discoveries concerning RNA. Traditionally considered to be only a passive messenger of genetic information, RNA can also take on an enzymatic role in which it catalyzes, or facilitates, intracellular

chemical reactions essential to life. Before their discoveries, enzymatic activity had been attributed exclusively to proteins. Cech was the first person to show that an RNA molecule could catalyze a chemical reaction, and he published his findings in 1982. Altman, whose earlier research had pointed strongly to such a conclusion, conclusively demonstrated such enzymatic activity by an RNA molecule in 1983 (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-R-Cech>).



Sidney Altman (1939–present) – Canadian-American molecular biologist who, with **Thomas R. Cech**, received the 1989 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. In 1969 Altman became a researcher at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England. There he worked with British biophysicist Francis Crick and South African biologist Sydney Brenner and embarked on the research that would later lead to his Nobel Prize-winning discoveries. Altman's initial investigations into RNA concerned a small molecule called transfer-RNA (tRNA), which carries amino acids to organelles called ribosomes, where the amino acids are linked into proteins. He isolated and characterized a precursor molecule in the biochemical pathway leading to the synthesis of tRNA and subsequently identified an enzyme called ribonuclease P (RNase P), which cleaved a specific bond within the precursor molecule. This enzymatic cleavage enabled the tRNA synthetic pathway to advance to the next step. During purification of RNase P, Altman discovered that there was an RNA segment within the enzyme and that this segment served as the active, or catalytic, portion of the enzyme. Altman was working independently of Cech when both discovered the catalytic properties of RNA (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sidney-Altman>).

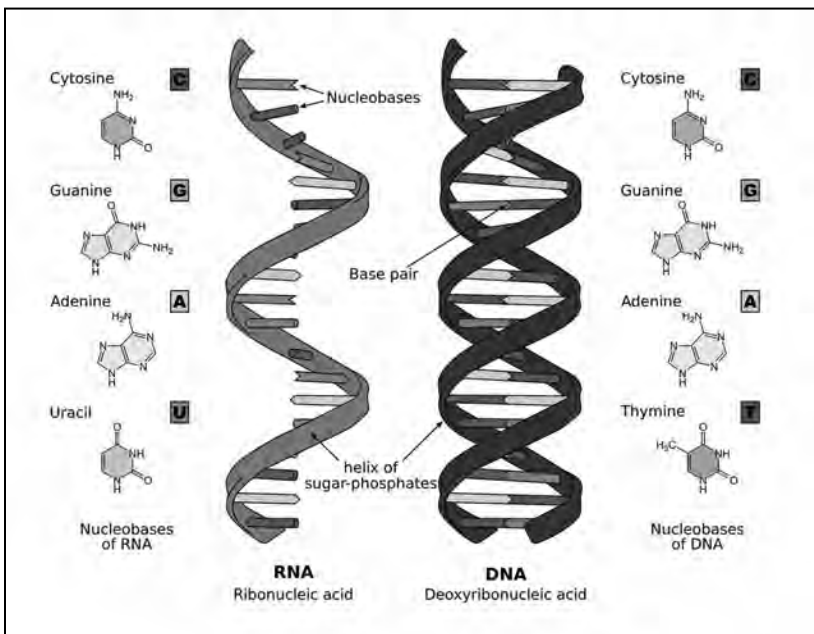


ribonucleic acid (RNA) – nucleic acid involved in the process of translating DNA, the genetic material, into proteins. It is usually single-stranded, unlike the double-stranded DNA, and consists of a large number of nucleotides strung together, each of which comprises the sugar ribose, a phosphate group, and one of four bases (uracil, cytosine, adenine, or guanine). RNA is copied from DNA by the assemblage of free nucleotides against an unwound portion (a single strand) of DNA, with DNA serving as the template. In this process, uracil (instead of the thymine in DNA) is paired with adenine, and guanine with cytosine, forming base pairs that then separate. The RNA then travels to the ribosomes where it serves to assemble proteins from free amino acids. In a few viruses, such as retro-viruses, RNA is the only hereditary material.

RNA occurs in three major forms, each with a different function in the synthesis of protein molecules. Messenger-RNA (mRNA) acts as the template for protein synthesis. Each codon (a set of three bases) on the RNA molecule is matched up with the corresponding amino acid, in accordance with the genetic code. This process (translation) takes place in the ribosomes (found in large numbers in the cytoplasm of living cells), which are made up of proteins and ribosomal-RNA (rRNA). Transfer-RNA (tRNA) is responsible for combining with specific amino acids, and then matching up a special “anticodon” sequence of its own with a codon on the mRNA. This is how the genetic code is translated into proteins.

deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) – complex giant molecule that contains, in chemically coded form, all the information needed to build, control, and maintain a living organism. DNA is a ladder-like double-stranded nucleic acid that forms the basis of genetic inheritance in all organisms, except for a few viruses that have only RNA. In organisms other than bacteria it is organized into chromosomes and contained in the cell nucleus.

DNA is made up of two chains of nucleotide subunits, with each nucleotide containing either a purine (adenine or guanine) or pyrimidine (cytosine or thymine) base. The bases link up with each other (adenine linking with thymine, and cytosine with guanine) to form base pairs that connect the two strands of the DNA molecule like the rungs of a twisted ladder. The



specific way in which the pairs form means that the base sequence is preserved from generation to generation.

Hereditary information is stored as a specific sequence of bases. A set of three bases, known as a codon, acts as a blueprint for the manufacture of a particular amino acid, the subunit of a protein molecule. Geneticists identify the codons by the initial letters of the constituent bases — for example, a base sequence of codon CAG is cytosine-adenine-guanine. The meaning of each of the codons in the genetic code has been worked out by molecular geneticists. There are four different bases, which means that there must be $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ different codons. Proteins are usually made up of only 20 different amino acids, so many amino acids have more than one codon (for example, GGT, GGC, GGA and GGG all code for the same amino acid, glycine).

The information encoded by the codons is transcribed by mRNA and is then translated into amino acids in the ribosomes and cytoplasm. The sequence of codons determines the precise order in which amino acids are linked up during manufacture and, therefore, the kind of protein that is to be produced. Because proteins are the chief structural molecules of living matter and, as enzymes, regulate all aspects of metabolism, it may be seen that the genetic code is effectively responsible for building and controlling the whole organism.

500 Nicholas Wade, *How Did Life Begin?* (New York Times, November 11, 2003).

501 Ibid.

502 Ibid.

503 John W. Wright (general editor) et al., *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*. (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), pp. 264–67.

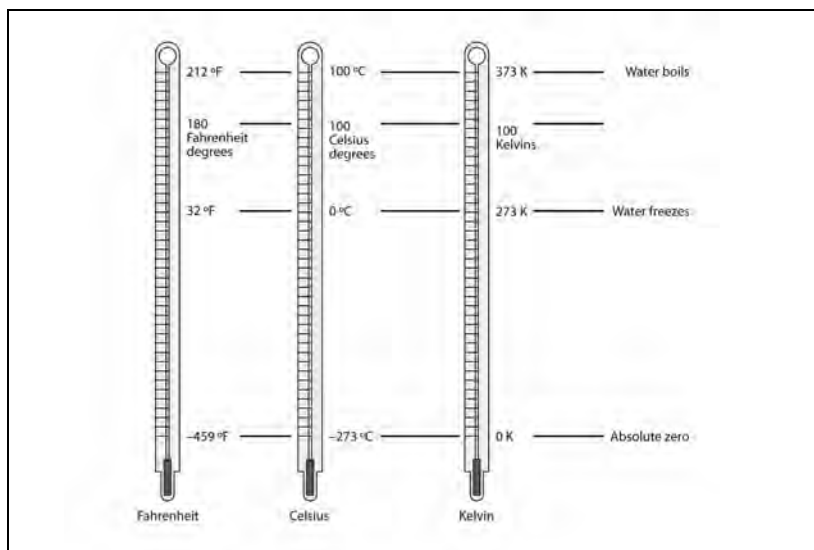
504–508 Ibid.

509 Ibid., pp. 242–58.

510 Ibid.

511 Ibid.

Kelvin temperature scale – conceived by Belfast-born British inventor and scientist William Thomson, also known as Lord Kelvin. It is one of the three best-known scales used to measure temperature, along with Fahrenheit and Celsius. Like other temperature scales, the freezing and boiling points of



water are factors in establishing the scale's range. There are 100 degrees between the temperature at which water freezes (273.16 K) and boils (373.16 K). Each unit on this scale, called a Kelvin rather than a degree, is equal to a degree on the Celsius scale. For this reason, just the K, not the degree symbol ($^{\circ}$), is used when reporting temperatures in Kelvin. There are no negative numbers on the Kelvin scale, as the lowest number is 0 K.

The idea for the Kelvin scale was sparked by a discovery in the 1800s of a relationship between the volume and the temperature of a gas. Scientists theorized that the volume of a gas should become zero at a temperature of -273.15°C . In 1848, Kelvin used this as a basis for an absolute temperature scale. He defined *absolute* as the temperature at which molecules would stop moving, or *infinite cold*. From absolute zero, he used the same unit as Celsius to determine the increments. Absolute zero cannot technically be achieved. However, scientists have been able to lower the temperature of matter to just a fraction of a Kelvin above absolute zero through various methods.

The Kelvin scale is popular in scientific applications because of the lack of negative numbers. This scale is convenient for recording the very low temperatures of liquid helium and liquid nitrogen, for example. The lack of negative numbers also makes it easier to calculate differences between temperatures, such as saying one temperature is three times another temperature. Kelvin is also used for pinpointing color temperature and is typically used in lighting. In a lighting application, Kelvin temperature represents the color temperature, such as white, blue or bright red, that relates to the physical temperature of an object (source: <https://www.livescience.com/39994-kelvin.html>).

512 John W. Wright, *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*, pp. 242–58.

513–517 Ibid.

518 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 891.

519 Ibid., pp. 1175–76.

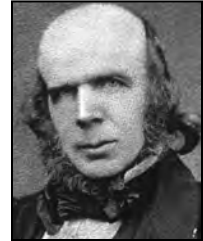
520 Will Steger and Jon Bowermaster, *Saving the Earth — A Citizen's Guide to Environmental Action*. (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1990), pp. 71–73.

521 Ibid.

522 Ibid.

523 Ibid.

Robert Angus Smith (1817–1884) – chemist and an early environmentalist who invented the term *acid rain*. Born in the Pollokshaws area on the south side of Glasgow, Smith studied divinity at the University of Glasgow, intending to become a minister in the Church of Scotland. He left before he graduated, however, and instead became a personal tutor. When the family whose children he was tutoring moved to Giessen in western Germany, he moved with them. He subsequently studied chemistry under Professor Justus von Liebig at the University of Giessen, gaining his PhD in 1841.



Back in Britain, Smith took up a post as a research assistant in the chemistry laboratories of 1st Baron Playfair at the Royal Manchester Institution. In 1845 he established himself as an independent analytical chemist. Working in London in 1852 he first coined the phrase *acid rain* when he made the connection between the industrial pollution so rampant in the city at the time, and the acidity of the city's rainfall. He went on to publish, in 1872, his analysis of the acidity of rainwater throughout the UK, *Air and Rain: the Beginnings of a Chemical Climatology*. This revealed that the most acidic rain he had found was in Glasgow. He also described three different types of acid rain found in countryside, suburbs, and towns. After the government passed the Alkali Act in 1863 to curb the acid emissions of certain heavy industries, Smith was appointed the first Chief Inspector of the Alkali Inspectorate. He remained in the post until his death in 1884 in Salford (source: <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/usbiography/s/robertangussmith.html>).

524 Will Steger, *Saving the Earth*, pp. 71–73.

525–527 Ibid.

528 **Upanishads** – the last section of the Hindu scriptures (the Vedas), composed in Sanskrit between 800 and 400 BCE. The name, meaning *to sit near*, refers to the secret transmission of these teachings by gurus (spiritual teachers, especially those who impart initiation).

Brahmanas – priestly Indian texts appended over time to each of the Vedas. They describe, set out the grounds for, and enunciate the principles of the Brahmins' system of sacrifice.

529 **Confucianism** – body of beliefs and practices based on the Chinese classics and supported by the authority of the philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE), latinized name of K'ung Fu-tzu or “Kong the Master.” The origin of things is seen in the union of yin and yang, the passive and active principles. Human relationships follow the patriarchal pattern. For more than 2,000 years, Chinese political government, social organization, and individual conduct was shaped by Confucian principles. In 1912, Confucian philosophy, as a basis for government, was dropped by the state.



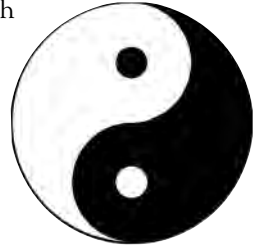
The writings on which Confucianism is based include the ideas of a group of traditional books edited by Confucius, as well as his own works, such as the *Analects*, and those of some of his pupils. The *I Ching* is included among the Confucianist texts.

Until 1912, the emperor of China was regarded as the father of his people, appointed by heaven to rule. The Superior Man was the ideal human and filial piety was the chief virtue. Accompanying a high morality was a kind of ancestor “worship.” Under the emperor, sacrifices were offered to heaven and earth, the heavenly bodies, the imperial ancestors, various nature deities, and Confucius himself. These were abolished as an aftereffect of the Xinhai Revolution (1911–1912, overthrew China’s last imperial dynasty and established the Republic of China), but ancestor worship (better expressed as reverence and remembrance) remained a regular practice in the home.

Under communism, Confucianism continued. The defense minister Lin Biao was associated with it, and although the communist leader Mao Zedong undertook an anti-Confucianism campaign (1974–1976), this was not pursued by the succeeding regime. See also **Endnote 214** in Volume 2.

Taoism – Chinese philosophical system, traditionally founded by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu in the 6th century BCE. He is also attributed

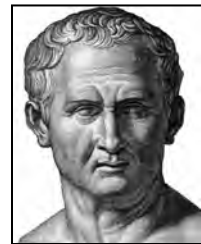
authorship of the scriptures, *Tao Te Ching*, although these were apparently compiled in the 3rd century BCE. The *tao* (way) denotes the hidden principle of the universe, and less stress is laid on good deeds than on harmonious interaction with the environment, which automatically ensures right behavior. The magical side of Taoism is illustrated by the *I Ching* (*Book of Changes*), a “book of divination.”



According to Taoism, the universe is believed to be kept in balance by the opposing forces of yin and yang that operate in dynamic tension between themselves. Yin is female and watery — the force in the Moon and rain that reaches its peak in the winter; yang is masculine and solid — the force in the Sun and earth that reaches its peak in the summer. The interaction of yin and yang is believed to shape all life.

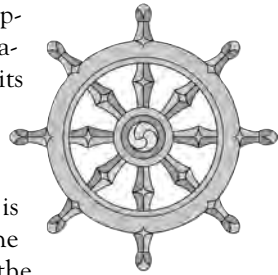
The magical, ritualistic aspect of Taoism developed from the 2nd century CE and was largely responsible for its popular growth; it stresses physical immortality, and this was attempted by means ranging from dietary regulation and fasting to alchemy. By the 3rd century CE, worship of deities had begun to appear, including that of the stove god Tsao Chun. Taoist texts record the tradition of mental and physical discipline, and methods to use in healing, exorcism, and the quest for immortality. The second major work is that of Zhuangzi (circa 389–286BCE), *The Way of Zhuangzi*. From the 4th century CE, rivalry between Taoists and Mahayana Buddhists was strong in China, leading to persecution of one’s adherents by those of the other; this was resolved by mutual assimilation, and Taoism developed monastic communities similar to those of the Buddhists. See also **Endnote 395** in Volume 7.

530 **Marcus Tullius Cicero** (106–43BCE) – Roman orator, statesman, and man of letters, born in Arpinum, Latium. In Rome he studied law, oratory, philosophy, and literature, and embarked upon a political career, attaining the consulship in 63BCE. Though he foiled Catiline’s revolutionary plot, he broke the law by executing Roman citizens without a trial, and when charges were pressed, fled to exile in Thessalonica (58BCE). In 57BCE, he was recalled by the people, but lost the esteem of both Caesar’s and Pompey’s factions by vacillating between the two. Living in retirement (46–44BCE), he wrote most of his chief works on rhetoric and philosophy. In 43BCE, he delivered his famous *Philippics*, a series of 14 speeches condemning Mark Antony (83–30BCE). He was murdered near Caieta by Antony’s soldiers as he tried to escape.



531 **Mahayana** – Sanskrit for *greater vehicle*; the form of Buddhism commonly practiced in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, Korea, and Japan. It dates from

about the 1st century CE, when it arose as a development within Buddhism in northern India. It emphasizes various forms of popular devotion based on its theory of the *bodhisattva* (Sanskrit for *enlightened existence*) — one who has attained the enlightenment of the Buddha but chooses not to pass into *nirvana* (a transcendent state in which there is neither suffering, desire, nor sense of self, and the subject is released from the effects of *karma* and the cycle of death and rebirth), voluntarily remaining in the world



to help lesser beings attain enlightenment. This example of compassion led to the emphasis in Mahayana on charity and comfort toward others. See also Endnote 395 in Volume 7 and Endnote 256 in Volume 11.

532 **Lourdes** – town and important site of Roman Catholic pilgrimage in Hautes-Pyrenees department (province or state), southern France. Bernadette Soubirous (1844–1879, saint of the Catholic Church) was led by a vision of the Virgin Mary to the springs at the Grotte de Massabielle in 1858, scene of many reputed miraculous cures.

533 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās.

534 **jinn** – from which came the English word *genie*; inhabitants of the subtle and immaterial — or subtly material — world (*‘ālam al-malakūt*), into which the material and physical world is plunged, as if into a liquid. If we picture a room in our mind, the “medium” in which that imagined room exists supports form, but is itself subtle — *‘ālam al-malakūt*. In traditional cosmology, the physical world is a *crystallization*, or projection, out of the subtle world, the *ether*; the ether itself is a projection out of the surrounding formless, or Angelic, world (*‘ālam al-jabarūt*); and the Angelic world is projected out of Being.

The jinn are the inhabitants of the subtle world, some of whom are “non-central” beings like the non-human creatures of this world, while others are central beings, like man — with free will, endowed with intellect, and capable of grasping the ultimate Reality, and thus capable of being saved. The jinn who occupy this central state have therefore religions and revelations, and some of their religions correspond to the religions of the world of men.

During his journey to al-Ṭā’if the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the Qur’an at night in the desert and a party of the jinn came, listened, and committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ). Later their chiefs came to the Prophet and made a *bay‘ah* (allegiance) with him on the spot, which is today the “Masjid of the Jinn” in Makkah.

Satan, considered to be a jinn by some Islamic interpretations, who according to other Muslim scholars may have been an angel, forfeited his angelic “credentials” by disobeying God. Angels, who belong to the formless world and are formless as the odors of perfumes, have to take on a subtle nature in order to be visible to man. In other words, they take on a substance of the subtle world, which is formal (in that what exists in that world has “form”), and then they assume a visible “form.” For example, magnetic fields are only visible when they work upon a substance that responds to them, and if angels appear, they must do so in an “ethereal” form.

The Qur’an says that the jinn were created of what some would say is smokeless fire (55:15) whereas man was created of clay, as by a potter; the angels were created of light. Some jinn are friendly to mankind, and others hostile; some are beautiful, and others, the *‘ifrit* and *ghawl* (from which the word *ghoul* derives), are hideous. Solomon (ﷺ) is famed for his power to command the jinn to his bidding, in building the temple, and in the working of prodigies (38:37–40). Islamic lore says, moreover, that the lives of certain jinn are incomparably longer than human lifetimes, and that there are jinn alive today in the subtle world who were alive in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

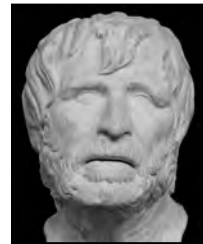
Sometimes the Qur’an addresses men and jinn together, as in *Sūrah al-Rahmān*, which is directed throughout its course to that duality. Some of its *āyāt* say, “O you *thaqalayn*...” that is, *having weight (substance and consequence)*, meaning the two species of creation having form (55:31); and,

O company of jinn and men, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass beyond! You shall not pass, except by authority. Which then, of the favors of your Lord, do the two of you deny? (55:33–34).

See also **Endnote 390** in Volume 5; and pp. 421–23 and Endnote 87 in Volume 11.

535 Wendy Doniger, *Miriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions*, pp. 286–87.

Hesiod (8th century BCE) – Greek poet, seemingly somewhat later than Homer, born in Ascra, at the foot of Mt. Helicon. Little is known about his life. Two of his epics have survived: *Works and Days*, which deals with the farmer’s life, and the *Theogony*, which teaches the origin of the universe and the history of the gods. His fame led to several other works being spuriously attributed to him.



536 Wendy Doniger, *Miriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions*, pp. 286–87.

537–539 Ibid.

540 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained! Strange Sightings, Incredible Occurrences & Puzzling Physical Phenomena*. (Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA: Visible Ink Press, 1999), pp. xi–xii.

541–543 Ibid.

544 Ibid., pp. xiv–xxv.

Bigfoot or **Sasquatch** – in the mountaineering folklore of North America, a creature the equivalent of the abominable snowman or Yeti (large hairy humanoid creature of the Himalayas), said to be 2–3 m (7–10 ft) tall; its footprints are reported to be 43 cm (17 in) long.

545 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

546 Ibid.

547 Ibid.

548 Ibid.

arachnid – any member of the arthropod group that includes spiders, daddy longlegs, scorpions, and (in the subclass Acari) the mites and ticks, as well as lesser-known subgroups; characterized by simple eyes and four pairs of legs.



platypus – small densely furred monotreme of Australia and Tasmania having a broad bill, tail, and webbed feet. Monotremes are one of the three main groups of mammals, along with placentals (Eutheria) and marsupials (Metatheria). They are typified by laying eggs rather than bearing live young, and by structural differences in their brains, jaws, digestive and reproductive tracts, and other body parts compared to the more common mammalian types. However, like all mammals, the female monotremes nurse their young with milk. Monotremes are traditionally referred to as the mammalian sub-



class Prototheria. The only surviving examples of monotremes are all indigenous to Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea, although there is evidence that they were once more widespread. The existing monotreme species are the platypus and four species of echidnas.

merfolk – according to folklore, merpeople are psychic aquatic beings from the planet Sirius. Their physical structure is part dolphin, not fish, as the original human and cetacean genomes are mammalian and otherwise not compatible. Through DNA alteration using high vibrational-frequency thought pattern known as biokenetic adaptation, a merperson will become bipedal. Reaching a speed of 300 mph, they reside in cavernous communities known individually as “pods” far beneath the ocean and number in population of a million or so.

549 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

550 Ibid.

551 Ibid.

Loch Ness – lake in Highland region, northern Scotland; part of the Caledonian Canal. It is said to be inhabited by a 12–15 m (40–50 ft) long “monster” but there have been no clear results from scientific investigation after several unconfirmed sightings.

552 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

553–565 Ibid.

566 Ibid.

Edward J. Ruppelt (1923–1960) – US Air Force officer best known for his involvement in Project Blue Book, a formal US government study of unidentified flying objects (UFOs). He is generally credited with coining the term *unidentified flying object*, to replace the terms *flying saucer* and *flying disk* — which had become widely known — because the military thought them to be “misleading when applied to objects of every conceivable shape and performance.” Ruppelt, a military man subject to regular checkups, mysteriously “died” of a heart attack at the age of 37.



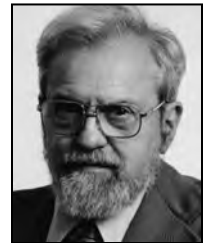
Project Blue Book – a series of systematic studies of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) conducted by the United States Air Force. It started in 1952, and it was the third study of its kind. A termination order was given for the study in December 1969, and all activity under its auspices ceased in January 1970. Project Blue Book’s two major goals were (1) to determine if UFOs were a threat to US national security, and (2) to scientifically analyze UFO-related data. By the time Project Blue Book ended, it had collected 12,618 UFO reports, and concluded that most of them were misidentifications of natural phenomena (clouds, stars, etc.) or conventional aircraft. A small percentage of UFO reports were classified as unexplained, even after stringent analysis. The UFO reports were archived and are available under the Freedom of Information Act, but names and other personal information of all witnesses have been redacted (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Blue_Book).

567 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

568 Ibid.

569 Ibid.

J. Allen Hynek (1910–1986) – professor of astronomy, astrophysicist, and consultant to a United States Air Force project (1948–1969) to assess reports of unidentified flying objects (UFOs); born in Chicago, Illinois to Czechoslovakian parents. His task for the Air Force was to examine at first hand more substantial reports of flying saucers and the like. In 1966, after a rash of sightings in Michigan, he went to the area to take charge of the investigation. After interviewing scores of people, he ascribed certain sightings to luminous marsh gas rather than something from space. Nevertheless, he said, “Scientists in the year 2066 may think us very naive in our denials.” He long asserted that UFOs should be taken seriously and he eventually became displeased with the Air Force approach. He said that its methods were slipshod and that it was not conducting a scientific study. The Air Force, in turn, concluded that there was no evidence of extraterrestrial craft and the UFO project was abandoned.



He is credited with coining the phrase “close encounters of the third kind” to describe humans meeting creatures from space. He used the phrase in his 1972 book, *The UFO Experience*, and it became the title of the 1977 Steven Spielberg film, on which he served as technical adviser. When a reporter once suggested that Dr. Hynek might be remembered not as an astronomer but as the man who made UFOs respectable, he replied, “I

wouldn't mind. If I can succeed in making the study of UFOs scientifically respectable and do something constructive in it, then I think that would be a real contribution" (source: <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/01/obituaries/j-allen-hynek-astronomer-and-ufo-consultant-dies.html>).

570 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

571 Ibid.

572 Ibid.

Michael D. Swords – professor of natural science. His major professional involvements are teaching and writing in the areas of general sciences and anomalous phenomena. His teaching focuses on human biology, the history and philosophy of science, scientific methodology, and the “parasciences” of which ufology is a member. His writings have concentrated mainly on topics in ufology, parapsychology, and cryptozoology. He has been the editor of ufology’s academic journal, *The Journal of UFO Studies*. Dr. Swords’ case is developed at length in:

Michael D. Swords, ‘Science and the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis in Ufology’, *Journal of UFO Studies, New Series 1* (1989), pp. 67–102.

Michael D. Swords, ‘Does the ETH Make Sense?’, *International UFO Reporter* (September/October 1992).

573 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

574 Ibid.

575 Ibid.

Jenny Randles (1951–present) – British author and former director of investigations with the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA), 1982–1994; born in the Rossendale Valley of Lancashire. Randles specializes in writing books on UFOs and paranormal phenomena. Two of her well-known works include *UFOs: A British Viewpoint* (1979) and *Breaking the Time Barrier: the Race to Build the First Time Machine* (2005). Subjects covered include crop circles, ESP, life after death, time anomalies, and spontaneous human combustion. According to her publishers, Simon & Schuster, Randles studied physics and geology at the university, has written articles for the *New Scientist*, and has sold more than 1.5 million copies of her 50 published books.

576 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

Roy P. Mackal (1925–2013) – University of Chicago biologist best known to the general public for his interest in the Loch Ness Monster and other cryptozoological entities; born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States. Mackal served in the US Marine Corps during WWII before attending the University of Chicago, where he received a PhD (1953). Mackal is widely considered to be one of the seminal figures in cryptozoology, the systematic study of “hidden animals” like the Loch Ness Monster and Mokele-mbembe, along with Bigfoot, the Yeti, and others. He was one of the founding members of the International Society for Cryptozoology, which was created in 1982 with the hope of bringing a degree of respectability to what is often seen as a pseudoscience. Dr. Mackal’s notable works include *The Monsters of Loch Ness* (1976), *Searching for Hidden Animals* (1980), and *A Living Dinosaur? In Search of Mokele-Mbembe* (1987).



577 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

578 Ibid.

James McClenon, *Deviant Science: The Case of Parapsychology*.
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

579 Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* pp. xiv–xxv.

580–587 Ibid.

588 The translation of *āyah* 6:113 as it appears on p. 266 and p. 323 may seem to have conflicting meanings; however the Arabic wording of the *āyah* tolerates both meanings as it pivots on the attribution of the pronoun of *ilayhi* either to Allah (ﷻ) or the *mushriks*.

589 Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*. (Boston, Massachusetts, USA: Beacon Press, 1983), pp. xiv–xix.

590–592 Ibid.

593 Ibid.

Today, as this volume goes to press, the monopolistic complexion of the worldwide “mass” media environment has become even more concentrated.

Of the top 30 media corporations in the world, 17 were founded in and are based in the United States. Eleven of these are either established or managed by Jews; that is, some 65% of the packaged information distributed to nearly 7 billion people is screened or filtered by a handful of executives who belong to a coterie of less than 0.3% of the world's population. Below is a list of the top US media corporations along with their revenues and major holdings:

1. **Time Inc.** – \$2.87 billion in media revenue

Richard Battista, President and CEO (Jewish)

Time Inc. used to be the magazine division of Time Warner, but was spun out as a standalone company in June 2014. Its most well-known titles include *Sports Illustrated*, *Time Magazine*, and *InStyle*. Time generates the majority of its revenues (53% in 2015) through advertising and it has suffered from the overall decline in magazine circulations. Time Inc.'s revenues declined at an average rate of 4.1%/year between 2011–2015.

2. **Gannett** – \$2.95 billion in media revenue

Robert J. Dickey, President and CEO

Gannett owns 93 daily newspapers in the US, including *USA Today*, and 400 other non-daily publications. It also owns more than 150 properties in the UK, within its Newsquest unit. The company, which had almost \$200 million in cash at the end of 2015, has capacity for growth through acquisitions. 2015 was an acquisitive year for Gannett as it bought Romanes Media Group, the 59.4% it did not already own of Texas-New Mexico Newspapers Partnership, and Journal Media Group. Gannett owns 23 television stations in addition to online holdings such as CareerBuilder.com, MomsLikeMe.com, ShopLocal.com, Cars.com, Apartments.com, CareerSite.biz, Livestream.com, Metromix.com, Reviewed.com, SavvyShopperDeals.com, Homefinder.com, BNOT.com, Nurse.com, and Ongo, Inc.

3. **Hearst Corporation** – \$4 billion in media revenue

Steven R. Swartz, President and CEO (Jewish)

Hearst publishes 15 daily newspapers and 21 consumer magazines, and owns 30 television stations in the US. Its big brands include the affiliate partners of the ABC and NBC networks, *Cosmopolitan*, *Esquire*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It also owns around 300 newspaper and magazine titles internationally.

4. **Microsoft** – \$4.58 billion in media revenue

Satya Nadella, CEO

Advertising makes up around 5% of Microsoft's total revenue. Microsoft sells ads alongside its MSN portal, search engine Bing, video calling service Skype, and its Xbox Live gaming and media platform. Microsoft increased its ad revenue by an average of 12.5%/year between 2010–2015, although this was behind the 17.9% internet ad market growth rate. In 2015, Microsoft announced a big ad deal with AOL,

which has seen it supplying AOL's search results, while AOL will handle Microsoft's display ad sales in its top nine markets.

5. **Time Warner** – \$4.57 billion in media revenue
 Jeff Bewkes, President and CEO
 Time Warner dropped down in these rankings due to its spinning off the Time Inc. publishing division in June 2014. The company now has three operating divisions: Turner Broadcasting System, HBO, and Warner Bros. Entertainment.
6. **Yahoo** – \$4.62 billion in media revenue
 Tim Armstrong, CEO of Oath Inc., which owns Yahoo (Jewish)
 Search advertising was Yahoo's biggest earner in 2015, generating 42% of the company's total revenue. Yahoo is the default search option in popular web browser Firefox. Display advertising is Yahoo's next biggest earner, with the majority of revenue coming from its own sites and 18% coming from third-party affiliate sites. Some 36% of Yahoo's revenues come from mobile. The company is currently assessing bids for its core business, which also includes search and mail.
7. **Discovery Communications** – \$6.11 billion in media revenue
 David Zaslav, President and CEO (Jewish)
 Discovery owns 14 TV networks in the US including the eponymous *Discovery Channel* as well as *TLC* and *Animal Planet*. It distributes 48 international brands which, combined, reach more than 2.6 billion subscribers in more than 220 countries worldwide. The US networks still generate almost half of the company's revenue (48% in 2014) and 67% of its operating profit.
8. **iHeartMedia** — \$6.12 billion in media revenue
 Robert Pittman, Chairman and CEO
 iHeartMedia used to be known as Clear Channel Communications and operates a US radio business and an international outdoor advertising business. Approximately half of the company's revenue is generated from radio broadcasting. The remaining half comes from advertising companies and other investments. The company owns 861 stations in the US and Premiere Radio Networks (a national radio network that produces, distributes, or represents approximately 90 syndicated radio programs, serves nearly 5,800 radio station affiliates and has over 213 million weekly listeners; programs include the *Rush Limbaugh Show*, *Glenn Beck*, and the *Sean Hannity Show*). It operates 107,000 display advertising structures in North America and 540,000 display units across Asia, Australia, and Europe.
9. **Advance Publications** – \$6.42 billion in media revenue
 Steven O. Newhouse, Co-President (Jewish)
 Advance Publications owns the Condé Nast Publications magazines business (including titles such as *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *GQ*),

several US newspapers (such as *The Plain Dealer* and *The Times-Picayune*), and a 31% stake in Discovery Communications.

10. **News Corp** – \$6.86 billion in media revenue
 Rupert Murdoch, Founder
 News Corp, in its current form, came about after the former News Corporation separated its information and publishing business from its broadcasting and film business (21st Century Fox) in 2013. News Corp owns *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Post* in the US and *The Times* and the *Sun* in the UK. It also owns the promotions company News America Marketing, Barron's magazine, and book publisher HarperCollins.
11. **CBS Corporation** – \$9.57 billion in media revenue
 Sumner Redstone, Chairman Emeritus (Jewish)
 Leslie Moonves, President and CEO (Jewish)
 CBS derives most of its revenue from its TV channels and radio stations. CBS Corporation has operations in virtually every field of media and entertainment, including broadcast television (CBS and the CW — a joint venture between CBS Corporation and Warner Bros. Entertainment), cable television (Showtime Networks, Smithsonian Networks, and CBS Sports Network), local television (CBS television stations), television production and syndication (CBS Television Studios, CBS Studios International and CBS Television Distribution), radio (CBS Radio), advertising on out-of-home media (CBS Outdoor), publishing (Simon & Schuster), interactive media (CBS Interactive), music (CBS Records), licensing and merchandising (CBS Consumer Products), video/DVD (CBS Home Entertainment), motion pictures (CBS Films) and socially responsible media (EcoMedia). CBS owns 117 US radio stations and 29 television stations.
12. **Viacom** – \$9.61 billion in media revenue
 Sumner Redstone, Chairman Emeritus (Jewish)
 Robert M. Bakish, CEO
 Viacom runs more than 250 TV channels worldwide, including MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, and Channel 5 in the UK. As *Reuters* noted, Viacom shares have fallen by more than 50% in the past two years as its cable networks suffered continued ratings declines. Viacom's US ad revenue has declined in the last seven straight quarters. 93-year-old media mogul Sumner Redstone's trust owns 80% of movie theater company National Amusements, which owns 80% of the voting rights in both Viacom and CBS.
13. **Facebook** – \$11.49 billion in media revenue
 Mark Zuckerberg, Chairman and CEO (Jewish)
 Facebook has been the main beneficiary of the transition to mobile. Its total media revenue grew 63% over the past year, thanks to the company

embracing mobile technology, encouraging users to visit the site/app multiple times each day. The fourth quarter of 2013 was the first in which Facebook’s mobile revenue exceeded desktop and, by the end of 2015, mobile ad revenue accounted for 73% of the total.

14. **21st Century Fox** – \$18.67 billion in media revenue

James Murdoch, CEO

21st Century Fox owns the huge Fox Broadcasting and Fox Sports television companies, plus STAR India, and it has a 39% stake in British broadcasting company Sky. The company’s cable network programming division increased revenues by 12.2% in 2015 to a record \$13.8 billion. Not included in this figure are Fox’s film entertainment or direct broadcast satellite television segments.

15. **Comcast** – \$19.72 billion in media revenue

Brian L. Roberts, Chairman and CEO (Jewish)

The majority (88%) of Comcast’s media revenue came from its NBC Universal cable networks and broadcast TV divisions. The cable division comprises 15 national cable networks in the US — USA Network, Syfy, CNBC, and more — and nine international TV channels. On the broadcast side, the company operates NBC and Spanish-language network Telemundo. The rest of Comcast’s media revenue comes from its cable business, which gets an allocation of ad slots within the cable networks it transmits to customers. Comcast also owns video streaming service Hulu.

16. **The Walt Disney Company** – \$22.45 billion in media revenue

Robert Iger, Chairman and CEO (Jewish)

Disney’s media networks cover ad revenue associated with its TV shows and the affiliate fees it receives for them, while Disney’s interactive looks at online properties such as its Club Penguin game and the Disney Infinity series. The Disney Channel is perhaps the best-known of Disney’s TV properties, but it also owns US national TV network ABC, which broadcasts shows such as *Modern Family* and *Grey’s Anatomy*. Disney also owns a 50% stake in digital media company Fusion and it has a 33% stake in video streaming platform Hulu. Not included in the revenue above are Disney’s other media holdings.

17. **Alphabet** – \$59.62 billion in media revenue

Larry Page (CEO) and Sergey Brin (President), Founders (Jewish)

Eric Schmidt, Chairman

Alphabet is the new holding company that owns Google — and it dominates this ranking by a considerable distance. Eric Schmidt, Alphabet’s executive chairman, recently said that advertising will always be Google’s dominant business. Google makes most of its money through search advertising, but it is also a huge player in display advertising through its DoubleClick ad tech platform, and video advertising,

through *YouTube*. Google increased its operating profit by 17.4% to \$19.4 billion in 2015 (source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-30-biggest-media-owners-in-the-world-2016-5>).

594–600 Ibid.

601 Jack C. Plano and Milton Greenberg, *The American Political Dictionary*. (Fort Worth, Texas, USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1990), p. 225.

602 Ibid., p. 245.

603 Narrated by Qatādaḥ ibn Da‘āmaḥ and recorded by al-Shawkānī.

لا أنشك ولا أسأل.

604 **Mikhail Sergeyeovich Gorbachev** (1931–present) – refer to **Endnote 378** in Volume 10.

605 This is a *fiqhī* rule (*qā‘idaḥ fiqhīyah*), not a prophetic hadith.

الضرورات تبيح المحظورات.

606 Narrated by ‘Uday ibn Ḥātīm and Abū Tha‘labāḥ, and recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhī.

سألت رسول الله ﷺ عن صيد الكلب المعلم . قال "إذا أرسلت كلبك المعلم . وذكرت اسم الله فكل ما أمسك عليك."

607 Narrated by Rāfi‘ ibn Khudayj, and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

قلت للنبي ﷺ "إننا نلقى العدو غدًا وليس معنا مدى." فقال "ما أنهر الدم وذكر اسم الله فكلوا."

608 Among them are Iṣḥāq ibn Rahawayh, Abū Mālīk, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylá, and Rabī‘ah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

The fact that some scholars have adopted multiple positions suggests that their rulings may have been time or place specific. It could also be attributed to the impact of illegitimate governments that were seeking legitimacy for certain policies by falsely citing the name of a well-known scholar who may not have held the opinion imputed to him.

609 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, pp. 286–87.

610 Ibid.

611 Ibid.

essential amino acids – amino acids are organic compounds composed of a central carbon, a unique side chain, at least one amino group, and at least one carboxylic acid group. The human body uses amino acids to produce proteins, perform critical metabolic functions in the formation of other molecules, and to produce energy. Some amino acids are synthesized by the human body, but the essential amino acids must be obtained from food.

Nutritionally nonessential, or dispensable, amino acids can be made by the human body through various pathways of biosynthesis. Healthy humans with normal amino acid synthesis produce the following amino acids: *alanine, arginine, asparagine, aspartic acid, cysteine, glutamine, glycine, serine, glutamic acid, proline, and tyrosine.*


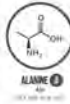


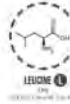











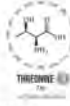

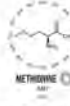
The production of nonessential amino acids can be disrupted by organ malfunction. This occurs in premature birth, liver malfunction, and insufficient enzyme production. Dispensable amino acids that can become indispensable are called conditional amino acids. Arginine, cysteine, glutamine, proline, and tyrosine are conditional amino acids. While indispensable, conditional amino acids must be obtained from food.

Nutritionally essential, or indispensable, amino acids cannot be made by the human body and must be obtained from food. These amino acids are

A GUIDE TO THE TWENTY COMMON AMINO ACIDS

AMINO ACIDS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROTEINS IN LIVING ORGANISMS. THERE ARE OVER 500 AMINO ACIDS FOUND IN NATURE. HOWEVER, THE HUMAN GENETIC CODE ONLY DIRECTLY ENCODES 20 'ESSENTIAL' AMINO ACIDS MUST BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIET, WHILE NON-ESSENTIAL AMINO ACIDS CAN BE SYNTHESIZED IN THE BODY.

Chart Key: ALIPHATIC AROMATIC ACIDIC BASIC HYDROXYLIC SULFUR-CONTAINING AMIDES NON-ESSENTIAL ESSENTIAL

 ALANINE (A) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 GLYCINE (G) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 SERINE (S) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 CYSTEINE (C) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 METHIONINE (M) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 PROLINE (P) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 VALINE (V) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>
 PHENYLALANINE (F) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 TRYPTOPHAN (T) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 TYROSINE (Y) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 ASPARTIC ACID (D) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 GLUTAMIC ACID (E) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 ARGININE (R) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 HISTIDINE (H) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>
 LEUCINE (L) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 ISOLEUCINE (I) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 THREONINE (T) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 ASPARAGINE (N) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>	 GLUTAMINE (Q) <small>(GET FROM MEAT)</small>		

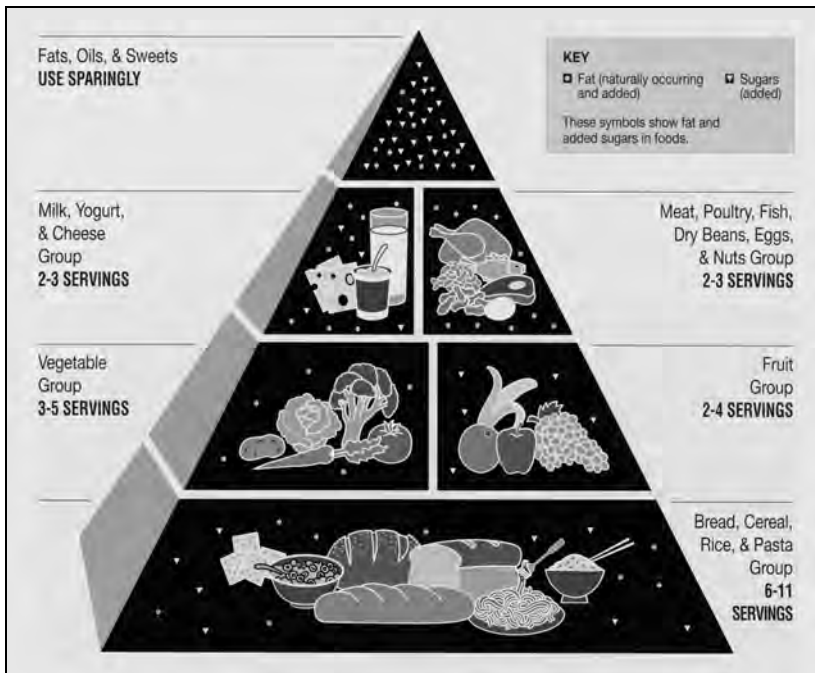
Note: This chart only shows those amino acids for which the human genetic code directly encodes. For 'conditionally' essential amino acids, the human genetic code encodes for a special enzyme in some cases, allowing them to be synthesized in the body. In other cases, the human genetic code encodes for a special enzyme.

not optional, as a lack of sufficient bioavailability has adverse health effects. In the 1930s, the essentiality of eight amino acids was established. The eight original essential amino acids are *isoleucine*, *leucine*, *lysine*, *methionine*, *phenylalanine*, *threonine*, *tryptophan*, and *valine*. Food sources of amino acids are protein-rich foods. As these foods are digested and assimilated the peptide bonds that link amino acids chains to form the proteins are broken.

When amino acids were first classified by essentiality, only eight of the 22 standard amino acids were thought to be essential to adult humans. For a time it was thought that *histidine* was only indispensable during infancy, making it a conditional amino acid. Histidine was later reclassified as an essential amino acid when it was found to be indispensable throughout the human lifespan (source: <http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/eight-essential-amino-acids-called-essential-8795.html>).

Food Guide Pyramid – according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion,

The Pyramid is an outline of what to eat each day. It's not a rigid prescription, but a general guide that lets you choose a healthful diet that's right for you. The Pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need and at the same time the right



amount of calories to maintain or improve your weight. The Pyramid also focuses on fat because most American diets are too high in fat, especially saturated fat.

The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes foods from the five major food groups shown in the three lower sections of the Pyramid. Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. Foods in one group can't replace those in another. No one food group is more important than another — for good health, you need them all.

The Food Guide Pyramid, which was released by the USDA in 1992, was replaced in 2005 by MyPyramid. In 2011, MyPlate replaced MyPyramid and represents the current USDA guidance. MyPlate is part of a larger communication initiative based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to help consumers make better food choices. MyPlate is designed to remind Americans to eat healthfully, and is not intended to change consumer behavior alone. MyPlate illustrates the five food groups using a familiar mealtime visual — a place setting. The MyPlate Daily Checklist shows an individual's food group targets — what and how much to eat within his calorie allowance. Everyone's food plan is personalized, based on age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level.

612 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, pp. 286–87.

613 Ibid.

Light or “lite” meat refers to cuts of meat that have at least 25% less fat than standard cuts for that grade of meat. USDA nutritional beef, also known as Natural Beef, refers to meat that has been minimally processed, where use of growth stimulants, antibiotics, and other additives to fatten the animals has been avoided. USDA Light Select, Light Choice, and Light Prime contain 25% less fat than the corresponding cuts.

The order in going from least-fat to most-fat grades is as follows: Light Select (or Good), Select (or Good), Light Choice, Choice, Light Prime, and Prime. Most ungraded meat is Select (Good); it corresponds to supermarket brands of lean beef. “Extra lean” meat contains less than 5% fat. About half of the USDA Select meat cuts fall in this category. NFF1 refers to meat containing less than 3.5% fat. FEF2 refers to cuts of meat with less than 6% fat.

Labels for processed meat and poultry products are required to provide nutrient content, amount of fat, and number of calories. The listing of fat composition, sodium content, and other nutritional information is voluntary. This information can be made available in notebooks or on placards in gro-

cery stores. Ground beef can be called “lean” only if a 3.5-oz serving contains less than 10 g of fat, less than 4.5 g of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg of cholesterol. Ground beef can be labeled “extra-lean” if it contains less than 5 g of fat, less than 2 g of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg of cholesterol.

Federal inspection of animal products relies on the Food, Safety, and Quality Service of the USDA. The inspection program involves evaluating the quality, characteristics, and yield or proportion of important cuts of meat. Freedom from damage, proper labeling, and absence of adulteration and disease are key aims of meat inspection. The Wholesome Meat Act of 1967 assures consumers that all meat sold in the United States is either inspected by the federal program or by an equivalent state cooperative program.

Safe handling instructions are available for ground meat and all raw meat products as a measure to combat food poisoning linked to uncooked or partially cooked meat, especially due to a strain of the bacterium *Escherichia coli* O157:H7. These safe handling instructions notify the consumer that food products may contain bacteria capable of causing illness if mishandled or improperly cooked. Hence such products should be kept refrigerated or frozen, and then before use, thawed in the refrigerator. Raw meat and poultry should be kept separate from other foods; and all working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands should be washed after coming in contact with them. These meats should be cooked thoroughly, and thereafter, kept hot; leftovers need to be refrigerated or discarded (rather than eaten after they have been at room temperature).

Cooking meat can create several classes of cancer-causing agents. Charring meat, poultry, or fish produces polycyclic aromatic compounds, especially when fat drippings deposit soot on charcoal-broiled food. Scraping off the charred portion can remove these materials. Another class, called heterocyclic amines (HCAs), tend to form within meat due to a combination of longer cooking time and high temperature, and cannot be scraped off. Once eaten, the liver activates HCAs, which can alter DNA, a first step in cancer development. Pre-cooking hamburger for two minutes drives off some of the raw materials for HCAs, and when barbecued such hamburger produces much less cancer-causing material than hamburger exclusively grilled.

Red meat need not be excluded from a fat-restricted diet to reduce fat consumption. Eating small portions of lean cuts of meat and trimming visible fat before cooking seems to preserve the benefits of protein consumption while abating the negative health impact of excess fat intake. Roasted meat contains less fat than broiled or braised meat. To avoid producing cancer-causing agents during cooking, meat should not be overcooked or charred. For low-fat meat (5–15% fat), consumers should focus on Light Select (Good), Select (Good), or Light Choice grades.^a

- a Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, pp. 287–88.

614 Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 288.

615 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, pp. 626–27.

Ole Christensen Rømer (1644–1710) – Rømer can also be written as Römer or Roemer, Ole can also be written as Olaus or Olaf; Danish astronomer who demonstrated conclusively that light travels at a finite speed. Rømer went to Paris in 1672, where he spent nine years working at the Royal Observatory. The observatory's director, Italian-born French astronomer Gian Domenico Cassini, was engaged with a problem that had been studied long before by Galileo: how to use the periodic eclipses of the moons of Jupiter as a universal clock that would be an aid to navigation (as a moon goes behind Jupiter, it passes into the shadow of the planet and disappears). Cassini and his coworkers discovered that the times between successive eclipses of the same moon (for example, Io) show an irregularity that is connected with the location of Earth on its own orbit. The time elapsed between successive eclipses of Io becomes shorter as Earth moves closer to Jupiter and becomes longer as Earth and Jupiter draw farther apart. Cassini had considered but then rejected the idea that this might be due to a finite propagation speed for light.



In 1676, Rømer announced that the eclipse of Io scheduled for November 9 would be 10 minutes later than the time deduced on the basis of earlier eclipses of the same satellite. When events transpired as he had predicted, Rømer explained that the speed of light was such that it takes light 22 minutes to cross the diameter of Earth's orbit (17 minutes would be more accurate). Dutch mathematician Christiaan Huygens, in his *Traité de la lumière* (*Treatise on Light*, 1690), used Rømer's ideas to give an actual numerical value for the speed of light that was reasonably close to the value accepted today — though somewhat inaccurate due to an overestimate of the time delay and some error in the then-accepted figure for the diameter of Earth's orbit.

In 1679 Rømer went on a scientific mission to England, where he met Isaac Newton and the astronomers John Flamsteed and Edmond Halley. Upon his return to Denmark in 1681, he was appointed royal mathematician and professor of astronomy at the University of Copenhagen. At the university observatory he set up an instrument with altitude and azimuth circles and a telescope, which accurately measured the position of celestial objects.

He also held several public offices, including that of mayor of Copenhagen in 1705 (source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ole-Romer>).

visible spectrum – the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that is visible to the human eye. Electromagnetic radiation in this range of wavelengths is called *visible light* or simply *light*. A typical human eye will respond to wavelengths in the approximate range 390–700 nm.

nano – prefix used in SI (Systeme International or French International System of metric units) units of measurement, equivalent to a one-billionth part; for example, a nanosecond is one-billionth of a second.

616 Stephen P Elliott et al., *Webster's New World Encyclopedia*, pp. 626–27.

Isaac Newton (1642–1727) – English physicist and mathematician, born in Lincolnshire, England. Newton was a student at Cambridge University when a plague epidemic caused Cambridge to close (1665–1666). During this period, he first developed new methods in mathematics — extending the binomial theorem, finding a useful method for approximating solutions to equations, and inventing calculus. He also experimented with light, finding that white light was a mixture of all colors, and began to think about gravity. Instead of publishing his work, however, he circulated manuscripts to friends. After he built the first reflecting telescopes, the Royal Society elected him a fellow, and at this point, he began to communicate some of his discoveries more widely. Upon urging to publish his theory explaining the motions of planets, he produced his monumental work, *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (*Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 1687), often referred to simply as the *Principia*, containing his laws of motion and gravity as well as such topics as artificial satellites. He also wrote a full account of his study of light, called *Opticks* (1704). Although Newton devoted a major portion of his life to alchemy, the predecessor of chemistry, he did not publish any results. Refer also to Endnote 326 in Volume 10.



617 Willam H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, p. 618.

618 Ibid.

619 Ibid.

620 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 60–63.

621–623 Ibid.

624 Ibid.

Benito (Amilcare Andrea) Mussolini (1883–1945) – known as Il Duce (The Leader); Italian prime minister (1922–1943) and dictator, born in Predappio, Italy. A socialist during his early years, he broke with the Italian Socialist Party after advocating Italian intervention in WWI. In 1919 he helped found the Fasci di Combattimento as a would-be revolutionary force, and in 1922 became prime minister, his success symbolized by the March on Rome (1922). By 1925 he had established himself as dictator.



His rule saw the replacement of parliamentarism by a “Corporate State” and an officially totalitarian system; the establishment of the Vatican State (1929); the annexation of Abyssinia (1935–1936) and Albania (1939); and the formation of the Axis with Germany. His declaration of war on Britain and France exposed Italy’s military unpreparedness, and was followed by a series of defeats in North and East Africa and in the Balkans. Following the Allied invasion of Sicily (1943), and with his supporters deserting him, he was overthrown and arrested. Rescued from imprisonment by German paratroopers, he was placed in charge of the puppet Italian Social Republic, but in 1945 he was captured by the Italian Resistance and shot. See also **Endnote 290** in Volume 7.

625 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 60–63.

626 Ibid.

627 Ibid.

Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) – Ghanaian statesman, prime minister (1957–1960), and president (1960–1966), born in Nkroful, Ghana. He studied in both the USA and UK, returning to Ghana in 1947, and in 1949 formed the nationalist Convention People’s Party. In 1950, he was imprisoned, but elected to parliament while still in jail. Released in 1951, he became leader of business in the Assembly, and then premier. Called the “Gandhi of Africa,” he was a significant leader both of the movement against white domination and of Pan-African consciousness. He was the moving spirit behind the Charter of African States (1961). Economic reforms led to political opposition and several attempts on his life, interfer-



ence with the judiciary, and the formation of a one-party state in 1964. After his regime was overthrown by a military coup during his absence in China, he sought asylum in Guinea, where he was given the status of co-head of state. Nkrumah died in Bucharest, Romania.

Julius (Kambarage) Nyerere (1922–1999) – Tanzanian statesman and president (1962–1985), born in Butiama, Tanzania. He became a teacher at Makerere, then studied at Edinburgh. On his return, he reorganized the nationalists into the Tanganyika African National Union (1954) of which he became president, and in 1960 became chief minister. He was premier when Tanganyika was granted internal self-government (1961), and president on independence (1962). In 1964 he negotiated the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, as Tanzania. He led his country on a path of socialism and self-reliance, but his policies failed, and he retired in 1985.



Jomo Kenyatta (circa 1897–1978) – originally Kamau Ngengi; Kenyan statesman and president (1964–1978), born in Mitumi, Kenya. Educated at a Scots mission school, he studied at London, and became president of the Pan-African Federation. In the late-1940s his Kenya African Union advocated total independence in a unitary state. He was charged with leading the Mau Mau “terrorist” organization (a charge he denied), and was sentenced to seven years of hard labor in 1952, then exiled. In 1960, while still in detention, he was elected president of the new Kenya African National Union Party. He became an MP in 1961, prime minister in 1963, and president of the Republic of Kenya in 1964. He adopted moderate social and economic policies, and succeeded in conciliating many members of the Kenyan white community.



Kenneth (David) Kaunda (1924–present) – Zambian statesman and president (1964–1991), born in Lubwa, Zambia. He became a teacher, founded the Zambian African National Congress (1958), and was subsequently imprisoned. Elected president of the United National Independence Party in 1960, he played a leading role in his country’s independence negotiations, and became the country’s first president. After a failed military coup in 1990, he agreed to multi-party elections in 1991, but lost the presidency to Frederick Chiluba, leader of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy.



Leopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) – Senegalese statesman and first president (1960–1980), born in Senegal. He became a teacher, writer, and politician, a member of the French Constituent Assembly in 1945, the deputy for Senegal in the French National Assembly (1948–1958), and president following his country's independence. He won several literary awards as a poet.



628 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 60–63.

629 Ibid.

Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina (1891–1961) – dictator of the Dominican Republic (1930–1961), born in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic. He rose to prominence as commander of the police. Heading a regime that was both highly repressive and highly corrupt, he was assassinated in Santo Domingo, a city he had renamed Ciudad Trujillo.

Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga (1930–1997) – originally Joseph-Désiré Mobutu; Zairean soldier and president (1965–1997). A sergeant-major in the Belgian colonial Force Publique, he became a member of the Mouvement National Congolais in 1958, and took command of the Congolese army in 1960. He came to power in a military coup the same year. Mobutu changed the name of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Republic of Zaire in 1971, but after he died, the name reverted back.

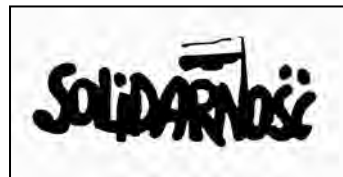


630 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 60–63.

631 Ibid.

632 Ibid.

Solidarity – Solidarnosc in Polish; an organization established in Poland (1980) as the National Committee of Solidarity to coordinate the activities of the emerging independent trade unions following protracted industrial unrest, notably in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. With Lech Walesa as its first president, it organized a number of strikes in early-1981 for improved wages and conditions, and became a force for major political reform. It attempted to seek re-



conciliation with the Polish communist government through a putative council for national consensus, but suffered continuous harassment and was rendered largely ineffective by the declaration of martial law (late-1981) and by the organization being outlawed. It remained underground, but came back into the political arena in mid-1988. Following its successes in the 1989 elections, Solidarity entered into a coalition government with the communists, with one of its members eventually becoming prime minister.

633 Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, pp. 60–63.

634–637 Ibid.

638 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qurʾān*, Volume 3, p. 1202.

al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah ibn ʿAbdillāh (died 1AH) – head of the numerous and prosperous Banū Makhzūm, a clan of Quraysh, in Makkah; one of the more influential opponents of the Prophet (ﷺ).

639 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qurʾān*, Volume 3, p. 1202.

Abū Jahl (circa 68BH/556CE–2AH/624CE) – literally *father of ignorance*; the name given by the Prophet (ﷺ) to ʿAmr ibn Hishām, known in *jāhiliyah* as Abū al-Ḥakam (father of wisdom). A prominent enemy of Islam among the Quraysh, his hostility earned him the appellation of Abū Jahl. He attempted to do physical harm to the Prophet, and was eventually killed in the Battle of Badr in 2AH.

640 Narrated by ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās.

641 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Ḥabannakah al-Maydanī, *al-ʿAqīdah al-Islāmīyah* (*Islamic Doctrine*). (Damascus, Syria: Dār al-Qalam, 1418AH), p. 250.

642 Narrated by Ibn Masʿūd and recorded by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. Masjid al-Jinn is located in Makkah, in an area called al-Ḥujūn. Brief and popular descriptions in Islamic historical sources say it is the place where the Prophet (ﷺ) encountered the jinn, read to them the Qurʾān, and outlined for them the Islamic *dīn*.

بيت الليلة أقرأ على الجن واقفا بالحجون.

643 Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol in Prose: a Ghost Story of Chirstmas*. (London, United Kingdom: Chapman and Hall, 1843), pp. 20–21.

Ebenezer Scrooge – fictional character in Charles Dickens’ novel, *A Christmas Carol* (1843). In the beginning of the novel, he is portrayed as a cold-hearted miser who despises Christmas. Ultimately redeemed by the three Ghosts of Christmas (Ghost of Christmas Past, Ghost of Christmas Present, and Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come), he went on to become one of the most famous characters in English literature, and a defining feature of the Christmas holiday in the English-speaking world.

644 Janet Cave et al. (editors), *Hauntings*. (Alexandria, Virginia, USA: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1989). pp. 22–23.

645 Ibid.

Ernesto Bozzano (1862–1943) – Italian psychologist and psychical researcher, author of a number of books analyzing psi phenomena. Called the “dean of Italian psychical researchers and spiritualists,” he was well-known during his lifetime, particularly in Italian and French circles, but long overlooked in the English-speaking world, perhaps in part because the bulk of his work was not in English.



Bozzano was born in Genoa, Italy into a middle-class family, and although he never received a formal education, he educated himself, eventually becoming a scholar in psychical research and spiritualism during the 1890s. He was deeply influenced by the ideas of the British philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer. Some of his published works include *Ipotesi Spiritica e Teorie Scientifiche* (*Spiritual Hypothesis and Scientific Theories*, 1903); *Phénomènes Psychiques au Moment de la Mort* (*Psychic Phenomena at the Moment of Death*, 1923); *Popoli Primitivi e Manifestazioni Supernormali* (*Primitive Peoples and Supernormal Events*, 1941); *Musica Trascendentale* (*Transcendent Music*, 1943); *La Psiche Domina la Materia* (*Psyche Dominates Matter*, 1948); and *La Crisi della Morte nelle Descrizioni dei Defunti Comunicanti* (*The Death Crisis in the Descriptions of the Communicating Dead*, 1952).

646 Janet Cave, *Hauntings*, pp. 22–23.

William G. Roll (1926–2012) – American psychologist and parapsychologist on the faculty of the Psychology Department of the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, Georgia. Roll is most notable for his belief in poltergeist activity; he coined the term “recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis” (RSPK) to explain poltergeist cases.

Roll moved from Denmark to the United States in 1946, aged 20, and enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts program at the University of California,

Berkeley, majoring in psychology and philosophy. In 1957, Roll joined the staff of J.B. Rhine's Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, where he spent seven years conducting psi experiments and investigating cases of haunting and RSPK/poltergeist activity. During his career Roll wrote more than 100 scientific papers, authored four books, and was president of the Parapsychological Association.



Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick (1845–1936) – physics researcher assisting Lord Rayleigh (the physicist who discovered the element argon), an activist for the higher education of women, Principal of Newnham College of the University of Cambridge, and a leading figure in the Society for Psychical Research, born in East Lothian, England; sister to British Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour of the infamous Balfour Declaration.

Sidgwick, a trained mathematician and scientist, together with her husband, devoted much of her professional life to finding evidence of the paranormal. Sidgwick investigated reported sightings of ghosts and attended seances, developing her theories of why people believed they saw ghosts, when ghosts seemed to appear, and what they looked like when they appeared. She denied that ghosts haunt old houses, are connected to crimes or tragedies, appear during special occasions, or dress in old clothing. But she did say they may be seen in daylight, dawn, and dusk, and inside and outside a home.

647 In this *āyah*, the designation *only* refers to *all* the listed prohibitions collectively and inclusively: beasts with claws, and the fat of oxen and sheep with the listed exceptions. Hence, in all of human history, because of their stubborn, pedantic, and casuistic character, Allah (ﷻ) forbade this combination to only the Jews.

648 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās.

649 Narrated by Qatādah.

650 **abortion** – the termination of a pregnancy before the fetus is viable. A spontaneous abortion (or miscarriage) may be caused by many reasons, including faulty embryonic development, abnormality of the placenta, trauma, or endocrine imbalances. Abortions may also be induced — either for “therapeutic” or elective reasons — by the administration of drugs, by suction or by the injection of sterile hypertonic solutions (including saline solution) into the amniotic cavity, which causes the fetus to be expelled. Although induced abortion is legal in the United States, state laws regulating the prac-

tice differ. Some states define the fetus as viable at 20 weeks’ gestation; others as late as 24 weeks.

651 Anna Higgins, *Sex-Selection Abortion: The Real War on Women*.

(Washington, DC: Charlotte Lozier Institute website, April 13, 2016).

<https://lozierinstitute.org/sex-selection-abortion-the-real-war-on-women/>

652 Recorded by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī.

أنا ابنُ الذَّبَّيْحِينَ.

653 Refer to the definitions of *baḥīrah* and *sā’ibah* in the glossary or in the *tafsīr* of *āyah* 5:103 (p. 210, Volume 11).

654 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by al-Bukhārī.

655 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa-al-Sharī‘ah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 8. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1411AH), p. 62.

656 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, pp. 63–64 (originally from *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*).

657 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 64 (originally from *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*).

رَوَى أَنْ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ كَانَ لَا يَزَالُ مَغْتَمًّا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ . فَقَالَ لَهُ " مَا لَكَ تَكُونُ مَحْزُونًا؟ " فَقَالَ [رَجُلًا] " يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . إِنِّي أَذْنَبْتُ ذَنْبًا فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ . فَأَخَافُ أَلَّا يَغْفِرَهُ اللَّهُ لِي . وَإِنْ أَسْلَمْتُ! " فَقَالَ لَهُ " أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ ذَنْبِكَ. " فَقَالَ " يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَقْتُلُونَ بَنَاتِهِمْ . فَوُلِدَتْ لِي بِنْتُ . فَتَشَقَّقْتُ إِلَيَّ امْرَأَتِي أَنْ أَتْرُكَهَا . فَتْرَكْتُهَا حَتَّى كَبُرْتُ وَأَدْرَكْتُ . وَصَارَتْ مِنْ أَجْمَلِ النِّسَاءِ . فَخَطَبُوهَا : فَدَخَلْتَنِي الْحِمْيَةَ وَلَمْ يَحْتَمِلْ قَلْبِي أَنْ أَرْجُوها أَوْ أَتْرُكها فِي الْبَيْتِ بَعِيرِ زَوْجٍ . فَقُلْتُ لِلْمَرْأَةِ ' إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَذْهَبَ إِلَى قَبِيلَةِ كَذَا وَكَذَا فِي زِيَارَةِ أَقْرَبَائِي فَبَاعِعْنيهَا مَعِي. ' فَسَرَّتْ بِذَلِكَ وَزِينَتْهَا بِالثِيَابِ وَالْحُلِيِّ . وَأَخَذَتْ عَلَيَّ الْوَأْتِيقَ بِأَلَا أُخَوِّنُهَا . فَذَهَبَتْ بِهَا إِلَى رَأْسِ بئرٍ . فَنظرت فِي الْبئرِ . فَطَظِنْتُ الْجَارِيَةَ أَنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَلْقِيها فِي الْبئرِ . فَالْتَزَمْتَنِي وَجَعَلَتْ تَبْكِي وَتَقُولُ ' أَيُّسَ تَرِيدُ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ بِِي! ' فَرحمْتها . ثُمَّ نظرتُ فِي الْبئرِ فَدَخَلْتُ عَلَيَّ الْحِمْيَةَ . ثُمَّ التَزَمْتَنِي وَجَعَلَتْ تَقُولُ ' يَا أَبْتَ لَا تَضِيعْ أَمَانَةَ أُمِّي. ' فَجَعَلْتُ مَرَّةً أَنْظُرُ فِي الْبئرِ . وَمَرَّةً أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْها فَأَرْحَمُها . حَتَّى غَلَبَنِي الشَّيْطَانُ . فَأَخَذْتُها وَأَلْقَيْتُها فِي الْبئرِ مِنْكَوسَةً . وَهي تَنادِي فِي الْبئرِ ' يَا أَبْتَ . قَتَلْتَنِي. ' فَمَكَّثْتُ هُنَاكَ حَتَّى انْقَطَعَ صَوْتُها فَجَرَعْتُ. " فَبَكَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَصْحَابُه وَقَالَ " لَوْ أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أَعاقِبَ أَحَدًا بِمَا فَعَلَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَعاقَبْتُكَ. "

658 **date-palm** (*Phoenix dactylifera*) – tree having a thick trunk covered with old, spiny leaf bases, and feathery leaves with large inflorescences. Native to the Muslim East, it has been widely cultivated for thousands of years.

olive tree (*Olea europaea*) – a tree having a silvery trunk, gnarled with numerous cavities; leaves on opposite sides that are narrow and pointed, leath-

ery, and dark green above, pale beneath; flowers with four petals that are small and white; and succulent fruit that is oily and green, ripening over one year to black (generally).

659 **pomegranate** (*Punica granatum*) – a tree with shiny, oblong leaves up to 8 cm (3 in) long and on opposite sides; and 2–4 cm flowers with scarlet petals.

desiduous – a tree or shrub that sheds its foliage at the end of the growing season, or annually.

660 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Volume 8, pp. 69–70.

661 Refer to Endnote 647 in this volume.

662 Dr. Bernard W. Barber, *Intestinal Parasites Robbing You Of Essential Nutrients Making Your Belly Fat*. (Reduce Belly Fat now website, Sept. 13, 2010). (<http://reducebellyfat-now.blogspot.com/2010/09/image-via-wikipedia-amoeba-worms-and.html>)

pinworm (nematode) – also known as eelworm or roundworm, it is an unsegmented worm, typically circular in cross-section. Its body is covered with a cuticle, and the head end terminates with a mouth surrounded by lips and three rings of sense organs. Abundant in aquatic sediments, in soil, and as parasites of plants and animals, some 12,000 species have been described.

hookworm – parasitic roundworm, of the genus *Necator*, with hooks around the mouth. It lives mainly in tropic and subtropic regions, but also in humid areas in temperate climates. The worm's eggs are hatched in damp soil, and the larvae bore into the host's skin, usually through the soles of the feet; they make their way to the small intestine, where they live by sucking blood. The eggs are expelled with feces, and the cycle starts again. The human hookworm causes anemia, weakness, and abdominal pain; it is common in areas where defecation occurs outdoors.



roundworm – any nematode, especially *Ascaris lumbricoides*, that infests the intestine of humans and other mammals.

tapeworm – parasitic flatworm; adults are commonly found in intestines of vertebrates. Its body typically comprises an attached head (scolex) and a chain of segments (proglottids) produced by budding. The tapeworm life cycle usually includes a larval stage found in a different intermediate host that is eaten by the final host.

663 Dr. Bernard W. Barber, *Intestinal Parasites Robbing You Of Essential Nutrients Making Your Belly Fat*.

664 Ibid.

trichina – small roundworm (*Trichinella spiralis*) that is parasitic in the human small intestine; infection usually results from eating raw or undercooked pork.

trichomoniasis – infestation of the mucous membrane of the vagina with a flagellated protozoan. It causes irritation and vaginal discharge, and may be passed to the male urethra during sexual contact.

665 Dr. Bernard W. Barber, *Intestinal Parasites Robbing You Of Essential Nutrients Making Your Belly Fat*.

acidophilus (*Lactobacillus acidophilus*) – along with *L. bulgaricus* and *L. casei*, they are all beneficial members of the *Lactobacillus* family. Both *L. bulgaricus* and *L. casei* are transient bacteria, commonly found in varying numbers in the intestines as they pass through. They come from daily consumable products such as yogurt, milk, and cheese.

All lactobacilli have some common traits. The prefix *lacto-* (from Latin for *milk*) indicates that these bacteria prefer a milk-based growing medium. Another common characteristic they share is the production of the enzyme lactase, which is essential for the digestion of milk sugar (lactose). They also produce lactic acid from carbohydrates, which creates an acidic environment in the digestive tract that helps get rid of any harmful microorganisms that thrive in an alkaline environment.

Some bacteria can live only in an oxygen-free environment, while others need small amounts of oxygen, just as people do. Because of their ability to grow in both the presence or absence of oxygen, lactobacilli are considered facultative anaerobic bacteria. These varying characteristics are very important to human physiological defense and immune mechanisms. For example, by using up all available oxygen in their habitat, the friendly “breathing” bacteria deny oxygen to the harmful species that require it.

By far, the most important bacterial resident of the small intestine is *L. acidophilus*. This is the colonizer, the inhabitant that constitutes the first line

of defense against alien invaders, as well as opportunistic organisms like yeasts, which can take over the area and spread throughout the body when its defensive occupying forces are weakened. *L. acidophilus* bacteria even help keep the heart healthy by lowering the levels of cholesterol in blood.



When *L. acidophilus* bacteria are present in sufficient numbers, they prevent invading pathogens and opportunistic organisms from finding “parking spaces” along the walls of the intestine, where nutrients cross into the bloodstream. If too many harmful bacteria manage to set up colonies, nutrient absorption can be blocked. Fortunately, when the walls are crowded with acidophilus colonizers, there is no room for newcomers and no way for opportunistic organisms to exceed their boundaries. A very desirable characteristic of some *L. acidophilus* super strains is that they adhere naturally to the walls of the intestines; these strains, known as *sticker strains*, are the most desirable because they hang onto their parking spaces with great tenacity — without harming the intestinal wall. Most pathogens, like disease-carrying *E. coli*, literally bore holes in the intestinal wall, causing micro-infections.

Although most commercial probiotics do not contain them, certain super strains of beneficial bacteria also act to inhibit undesirable microorganisms by their production of hydrogen peroxide, acids, and natural antibiotics. These substances threaten the existence of harmful bacteria.

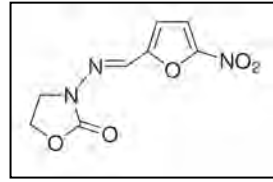
dysentery – name given to two different intestinal infections associated with diarrhea and the passage of blood and mucus in the stool. Both occur worldwide, generally wherever standards of sanitation and hygiene are inadequate. Bacillary dysentery results from bacteria of the genus *Shigella*; the disease is usually mild and short-lived. Amoebic dysentery results from infection with the protozoan *Entamoeba histolytica*, and is more serious, with more severe and persistent diarrhea. The liver is also commonly affected in amoebic dysentery, and amoebic abscesses may form within its substance.

666 Ruth Winter, *Poisons in Your Food: The Dangers You Face and What You Can Do About Them*. (New York, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1991), pp. 93–98.

667–674 Ibid.

675 Ibid.

furazolidone – a nitrofuran, $C_8H_7N_3O_5$, that is used in the treatment of bacterial gastroenteritis, dysentery, and giardiasis (an intestinal disorder characterized by abdominal discomfort and prolonged, intermittent diarrhea, caused by the protozoan *Giardia lamblia* and contracted by drinking untreated water, as from streams or ponds, contaminated with the feces of infected animals; also called Beaver Fever).



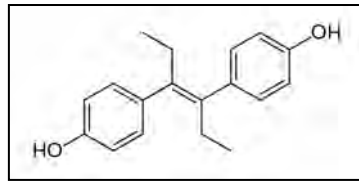
676 Ruth Winter, *Poisons in Your Food*, pp. 93–98.

677–682 Ibid.

683 Ibid., pp. 101–03.

684 Ibid.

diethylstilbestrol (DES) – nonsteroidal synthetic estrogen used as a drug and formerly used to promote growth of livestock. Unlike natural estrogens, DES remains active following oral administration. It is also administered as vaginal suppositories and by injection. DES breaks down more slowly in the body than do natural estrogens.



DES is used therapeutically to replace estrogen during menopause, to relieve painful menstrual periods (dysmenorrhea), to stimulate the development of secondary sexual characteristics in women with nonfunctioning ovaries, and to palliate advanced breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men.

Beginning in the 1940s and continuing for more than 20 years, DES was frequently prescribed to pregnant women to prevent miscarriages. In 1971 investigators demonstrated statistically that daughters of women taking DES had abnormally high rates of an otherwise rare form of cervicovaginal cancer. The use of DES and other estrogens during pregnancy is now proscribed in many countries.

Until the 1970s it was common practice to stimulate the fattening of beef cattle and chickens by mixing small amounts of DES into the feed or by implanting pellets of DES under the skin in the ears of the animals. Concern over trace amounts of the hormone in meat led to bans on the use of DES as a livestock growth stimulant beginning in the early-1970s (source: <https://www.britannica.com/science/diethylstilbestrol>).

685 Ruth Winter, *Poisons in Your Food*, pp. 101–03.

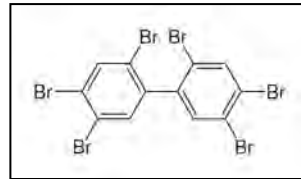
686–689 Ibid.

690 Ibid., pp. 103–07.

691–695 Ibid.

696 Ibid.

polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) – chemicals that were added to plastics used in a variety of consumer products, such as computer monitors, televisions, textiles, and plastic foams, to make them difficult to burn. Because PBBs were mixed into plastics rather than bound to them, they were able to leave the plastic and find their way into the environment. Commercial production of PBBs began in the 1970s. Manufacture of PBBs was discontinued in the United States in 1976. Concern regarding PBBs is mainly related to exposures resulting from an agriculture contamination episode that occurred in Michigan over a 10-month period during 1973–1974.



There are no known natural sources of PBBs in the environment. PBBs are solids and are colorless to off-white. PBBs enter the environment as mixtures containing a variety of individual brominated biphenyl (for PBBs) components, known as *congeners*. PBBs are no longer used in North America because the agriculture contamination episode that occurred in Michigan in 1973–1974 led to the cessation of its production.

Much of what is known about the health effects of PBBs in people comes from studies of ingestion in Michigan in the early-to-mid-1970s, where feed for farm animals was accidentally contaminated with a fire retardant containing PBBs. People were exposed to PBBs for several months when they ate meat, milk, and eggs from the contaminated animals. After news of the contamination episode became widespread, many Michigan residents complained of various health problems, including nausea, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, joint pain, fatigue, and weakness.

Laboratory animals fed PBBs had body weight loss, skin disorders, and nervous system effects, and their livers, kidneys, thyroid glands, and immune systems were seriously injured. Some animals fed high amounts died. PBBs also caused birth defects in animals, but it is not known for sure whether PBBs make males or females infertile. Most of the effects in animals occurred after they ate large amounts of PBBs for short periods or smaller amounts for several weeks or months. Body weight loss and effects on the livers, kidneys, and thyroid glands were observed.

Children are exposed to PBBs in generally the same way as are adults, mainly by eating contaminated food. Because of their smaller weight, children’s intake of PBBs per kg (or lb) of body weight may be greater than that of adults. The most likely way that infants will be exposed is from breast milk that contains PBBs, although fetuses in the womb are also exposed. Children who live near hazardous waste sites might accidentally eat some PBBs by putting dirty hands or other soil/dirt-covered objects in their mouths, by eating without washing their hands, or similar behavior. Some information on health effects of PBBs in children is available from studies of the Michigan contamination episode.

As indicated above, children can be exposed to PBBs before birth and from breast milk. PBBs are stored in the mother’s body and can be released during pregnancy, cross the placenta, and enter fetal tissues. Because PBBs dissolve readily in fat, they can accumulate in breast milk fat and be transferred to babies and young children. PBBs have been found in breast milk. Because the nervous system and thyroid are still developing in the fetus and child, the effects of PBBs on these target systems might be more profound from exposure before and soon after birth. That could mean fetuses and children are more susceptible to PBBs than are adults (source: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/PHS/PHS.asp?id=527&tid=94>).

697 Ruth Winter, *Poisons in Your Food*, pp. 103–07.

698–701 Ibid.

702 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health, Second Edition* (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2003), pp. 427–28.

703 Ibid.

704 Ibid.

705 Gary Null, *Gary Null’s Ultimate Lifetime Diet*. (New York, New York, Broadway Books, 2001), pp. 146–48.

706–709 Ibid.

710 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar and recorded in the *sunan* of al-Bayhaqī and by al-Ḥākim.

أُحِلَّتْ لَنَا مَيْتَانِ وَدَمَانٌ . فَأَمَّا الْمَيْتَانِ – فَالْجُرَادُ وَالْحَوْتُ – وَأَمَّا الدَّمَانِ – فَالطَّحَالُ وَالْكَبِدُ .

711 Narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

نهى النبي ﷺ يون خبيسي عن نجوم الحمى . ورخص في نجوم الخيل.

712 Narrated by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in the *sunan* of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ نهى عن كَلِّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ . وَعَنْ كَلِّ ذِي مِخْلَبٍ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ.

713 Narrated by Umm al-Mu‘minīn ‘Ā’ishah, Umm al-Mu‘minīn Ḥafṣah, and ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

أَمَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِقَتْلِ خَمْسِينَ فَوْاسِقًا فِي الْجَلِّ وَالْحَرَمِ — الْجِدَاةَ وَالْعُرَابِ وَالْفَارَةَ وَالْعَقْرِبَ وَالْكَلْبَ الْعَقُورَ.

714 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, pp. 82–83.

715 Ibid.

716 Ibid.

717 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

مَاتت شاةٌ لِسُودَةٍ . فقالت ”يا رسولَ اللهِ . ماتت فلانةُ (تعني الشاةَ).“ قال ”فلولا أخذتمَ مسكها؟“ قالت ”أناخذُ مسكًا شاةً قد ماتت؟“ فقال لها ”إيها قال اللهُ ‘قُلْ لَا أُجِدُّ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مَكْرَمًا عَلَى ظَالِمٍ يَظَعُمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مِيتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ حُكْمَ حَنْزِيرٍ‘ وأنتم لا تطعمونه . إن تدبغوه تنتفعوا به.“

718 As narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādaḥ, and Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr.

719 **Mu‘tazilah** – name of a philosophical or rationalist movement founded in al-Baṣrah by Wāṣil ibn ‘Atā’ (81–130AH/700–748CE), subsequently becoming one of the most important theological schools of Islam. The name comes from those who take a position of neutrality in the face of two opposing factions (*i’tizāl*), in particular with regard to the question of how to define a Muslim guilty of a grave sin. For the Khawārij, such a person was a *kāfir*; for the Murji‘is, a *mu‘min* in spite of his sinfulness (*fiṣq*); and for al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Wāṣil’s teacher, a *munāfiq*. The distinctive theses of the Mu‘tazili school were propounded by Abū al-Hudhayl al-‘Allāf in the form of the following five principles:

1. uniqueness of Allah (ﷻ);
2. justice of Allah;
3. every Muslim guilty of a serious offense, who dies without repentance, will suffer for eternity the torments of Hell;
4. here on earth, the same sinful Muslim cannot be classified either as a *mu‘min* or a *kāfir*; rather he belongs to a separate category, that of the

- malefactor* (an *intermediate state* or *al-manzilāh bayna al-manzilātayn*); and,
5. every *mu’min* has the obligation to intervene in public affairs to uphold the law and oppose the flagrant violation of justice.

For a period of some 30 years, the Mu‘tazilī school enjoyed the favor of Abbasid kings in Baghdad, until the reign of al-Mutawakkil (232–247AH) revoked the decrees imposing the view that the Qur’an had been created. But the Mu‘tazilāh continued to be supported in numerous regions of the Muslim world, especially in Persia, and by powerful princes such as the Buwayhids (322–454AH), during a second period, which lasted for approximately 170 years. The most characteristic feature of the first period was the extreme diversity of scholars and of doctrines, whereas in the second period, genuine schools were established. Even after the end of the second period, the Mu‘tazilī school did not disappear. Its theses have been adopted by Imāmī and Zaydī Shi‘īs, and in the current era a significant trend of the rehabilitation of the Mu‘tazilī school has been observed, especially in Egypt. Refer also to **Endnote 453** in Volume 10.

Murji’ah – name of a politico-religious movement in early Islam, derived from the Quranic usage of the verb that means *to defer judgement* (*irjā’*). In later times the name referred to all those who identified faith with belief, or confession of belief, to the exclusion of acts. They generally admitted that Allah (ﷻ) might either punish or forgive Muslim offenders. According to some, the punishment would be eternal; however, others affirmed that it would be temporary and that the offender would eventually enter Paradise through the intercession of the Prophet (ﷺ). The latter view agrees with predominant “Sunni” traditionalist doctrine.

Calvinism – a term with at least three applications: (i) the theology of the 16th-century Protestant reformer, John Calvin; (ii) the principal doctrines of 17th-century Calvinist scholars, including the “five points of Calvinism” affirmed by the Synod of Dort (1618–1619); and (iii) more broadly, the beliefs of those churches in the Reformed tradition that arose under the influence of Calvin, and the impact they had on the societies and cultures in which they took root. Historically, Calvinism has emphasized the sovereignty of God, the Bible as the sole rule of faith, the doctrine of predestination, and justification by faith alone. The movement greatly influenced the Pilgrims of New England. There has been a neo-Calvinist renewal in the 20th century under the influence of the theologian Karl Barth.

quantum mechanics – a science that deals with the behavior of matter and light on the atomic and subatomic scale. It attempts to describe and account for the properties of molecules and atoms and their constituents —

electrons, protons, neutrons, and other more esoteric particles such as quarks and gluons. These properties include the interactions of the particles with one another and with electromagnetic radiation (that is, light, X-rays, and gamma rays).

The behavior of matter and radiation on the atomic scale often seems peculiar, and the consequences of quantum theory are accordingly difficult to understand and to believe. Its concepts frequently conflict with common-sense notions derived from observations of the everyday world. There is no reason, however, why the behavior of the atomic world should conform to that of the familiar, large-scale world. It is important to realize that quantum mechanics is a branch of physics and that the business of physics is to describe and account for the way the world — on both the large and the small scale — actually is and not how one imagines it or would like it to be.

The study of quantum mechanics has been rewarding for several reasons. First, it illustrates the essential methodology of physics. Second, it has been enormously successful in giving correct results in practically every situation to which it has been applied. There is, however, an intriguing paradox. In spite of the overwhelming practical success of quantum mechanics, the foundations of the subject contain unresolved problems — in particular, problems concerning the nature of measurement. An essential feature of quantum mechanics is that it is generally impossible, even in principle, to measure a system without disturbing it; the detailed nature of this disturbance and the exact point at which it occurs are obscure and controversial (source: <https://www.britannica.com/science/quantum-mechanics-physics>).

uncertainty principle – also called **Heisenberg uncertainty principle** or **indeterminacy principle**; a statement, articulated (1927) by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg, that *the position and the velocity of an object cannot both be measured exactly, at the same time, even in theory*. The very concepts of exact position and exact velocity together, in fact, have no meaning in nature.

Ordinary experience provides no clue of this principle. It is easy to measure both the position and the velocity of, say, an automobile, because the uncertainties implied by this principle for ordinary objects are too small to be observed. The complete rule stipulates that the product of the uncertainties in position and velocity is equal to or greater than a tiny physical quantity, or constant ($h/4\pi$, where h is Planck's constant, or about 6.6×10^{-34} joule-second). Only for the exceedingly small masses of atoms and subatomic particles does the product of the uncertainties become significant.

Any attempt to measure precisely the velocity of a subatomic particle, such as an electron, will knock it about in an unpredictable way, so that a simultaneous measurement of its position has no validity. This result has nothing to do with inadequacies in the measuring instruments, the

technique, or the observer; it arises out of the intimate connection in nature between particles and waves in the realm of subatomic dimensions.

Every particle has a wave associated with it; each particle actually exhibits wavelike behavior. The particle is most likely to be found in those places where the undulations of the wave are greatest, or most intense. The more intense the undulations of the associated wave become, however, the more ill-defined becomes the wavelength, which in turn determines the momentum of the particle. So a strictly localized wave has an indeterminate wavelength; its associated particle, while having a definite position, has no certain velocity. A particle wave having a well-defined wavelength, on the other hand, is spread out; the associated particle, while having a rather precise velocity, may be almost anywhere. A quite accurate measurement of one observable involves a relatively large uncertainty in the measurement of the other (source: <https://www.britannica.com/science/uncertainty-principle>).

720 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

سئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ. قَالَ "الصَّلَاةُ لَوْ قَتَيْتَهَا ثُمَّ بَرَّتَ الْوَالِدَيْنِ ثُمَّ جَاهَدْتَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ."

721 Narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

لَا أَحَدٌ أَغْيَرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ. مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ حَرَّمَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ.

722 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ". فَإِذَا قَالُوا "لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ" عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بَحَقِّهَا. وَحَسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

723 David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*, p. 211.

724 Jack C. Plano, *The American Political Dictionary*, pp. 220–22.

Furman v. Georgia (1972) – In the facts of the case, William Henry Furman was burglarizing a private home when a family member discovered him. He attempted to flee, and in doing so, tripped and fell. The gun he was carrying discharged and killed a resident of the home. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to death. This and two other cases before the Supreme Court concerned the constitutionality of the death sentence for rape and murder convictions. The question before the court was whether or not the imposition and carrying out of the death penalty in these cases constitute cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the US Constitution.

The Supreme Court's one-page *per curiam* opinion (a ruling issued by multiple justices in which the decision rendered is made by the court acting collectively, and typically, though not necessarily, unanimously) held that the imposition of the death penalty in these cases constituted cruel and unusual punishment and violated the US Constitution. In over 200 pages of concurrence and dissents, the justices articulated their views on this controversial subject. Only Justices William J. Brennan, Jr. and Thurgood Marshall believed the death penalty to be unconstitutional in all instances. Other concurrences focused on the arbitrary nature with which death sentences had been imposed, often indicating a racial bias against black defendants. The Court's decision forced states and the national legislature to rethink their statutes for capital offenses to assure that the death penalty would not be administered in a capricious or discriminatory manner (source: <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/69-5030>)

725 Jack C. Plano, *The American Political Dictionary*, pp. 220–22.

726 *Ibid.*

Gary Mark Gilmore (1940–1977) – criminal, thief, murderer, abused child; born in Texas. His father was an abusive alcoholic and a con man whose violence and contempt for the law was passed on to his son. After committing a series of escalating petty crimes in Oregon during his teens, Gilmore was sent to reform school and later served his first stretch in prison. By the age of 35, he had spent half his life incarcerated. After receiving a conditional release in May 1976, Gilmore moved in with a cousin in Provo, Utah, and briefly led a normal life. However, two months later he killed two men in cold blood during separate robberies and was arrested shortly thereafter. Found guilty of first-degree murder in his 1976 trial, Gilmore chose not to appeal his death sentence. His case became a rallying point for opponents of the death penalty, and his execution was delayed for a time. He was executed by a firing squad in early-1977.



Gilmore was the first man to be executed in the United States in 10 years, and the first after the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty. Since 1977, there have been more than 1,400 executions carried out in the United States. Gilmore's story and the events surrounding his execution served as the subject of Norman Mailer's prize-winning book, *The Executioner's Song*, published in 1979 (source: <https://www.biography.com/people/gary-gilmore-11730320>).

727 Jack C. Plano, *The American Political Dictionary*, pp. 220–22.

728 Ibid., p. 406.

Clayton Act of 1914 – a major antitrust act, aimed at increasing competition in business. Provisions of the Clayton Act forbid price cutting and other abuses that tend to weaken competition, restrict corporations from acquiring stock in competing firms or building interlocking directorates, make corporation officers individually liable for violations, and facilitate civil suit procedures by injured parties. Labor unions and agricultural organizations not carrying on business for profit are exempted from the provisions of the Act.

The Clayton Act was intended to supplement and reinforce the Sherman Act of 1890, which had been weakened by the Supreme Court’s interpretation limiting its application to “unreasonable” combinations in restraint of trade. The Act was aimed at reducing the confusion surrounding the Sherman Act by more clearly defining unfair business practices. Enforcement, however, has been weakened through administrative indifference and judicial tolerance, except for the few periods of vigorous enforcement by the Antitrust Division and the Federal Trade Commission.

729 Jack C. Plano, *The American Political Dictionary*, p. 406.

730 Ibid., pp. 412–13.

731 Ibid.

732 Ibid., p. 201

733 Ibid.

734 ***Sympathy for the Devil*** (1968) – samba rock song by the Rolling Stones (iconic British rock and roll band), written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. Sung by Jagger, the song is a homage to the devil, written in the first-person narrative from his point of view, recounting atrocities committed throughout the history of humanity. It is performed in a rock arrangement with a samba (genre of rock music combining the sounds of Brazilian samba, bebop, jazz, and soul) rhythm. It first appeared as the opening track on their 1968 album *Beggars Banquet*. *Rolling Stone* magazine placed it at number 32 in its list of the “500 Greatest Songs of All Time” (lyrics: <https://genius.com/The-rolling-stones-sympathy-for-the-devil-lyrics>).

735 **Priestly** (source of the Pentateuch) – refer to **Endnote 115** in Volume 4.

Pentateuch – refer to Endnote 115 in Volume 4 and **Endnote 243** in Volume 7.

736 **Khawārij (Kharijites)** – the Arabic term, which is in the plural (singular: Khārijī), indicates the dissidents, who, at the Battle of Šiffīn (37AH), refused arbitration between ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, and “departed” (*kharaja*). They facilitated, as it turned out, Mu‘āwiyah’s victory over Imam ‘Alī, and later that of the Abbasids over the Umayyads. To them is attributed the earliest of the schisms in Muslim history. From the point of view of the development of dogma, their importance lies particularly in the formulation of questions relative to the theory of the *khilāfah* and to justification by faith or by works. From the point of view of political history, they disturbed the peace of the Islamic society by means of continual insurrections, which often ended in the temporary conquest of entire provinces. Refer also to pp. 356–57 and **Endnote 474** in Volume 8.

737 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 8, p. 115 (originally from *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*).

738 Ibid.

739 Ibid., p. 116 (originally from *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*).

740 Narrated by Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān and recorded by Abū Dāwūd; also cited in *Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl* (Volume 10, p. 407) by Ibn al-Athīr.

ألا إنَّ مَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ افْتَرَقُوا عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مَلَّةً . وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَلَّةَ سَتَفْتَرِقُ عَلَى ثَلَاثِ وَسَبْعِينَ .
ثِنْتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ . وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ . وَهِيَ الْجَمَاعَةُ .

741 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by al-Tirmidhī.

تَفَرَّقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً . أَوْ اثْنَتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً وَالنَّصَارَى مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ . وَتَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثِ
وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً .

742 **Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān** (circa 18BH–60AH) – refer to pp. 178–186 in Volume 7 and pp. 355–359 in Volume 8 for some reasons pertaining to why Mu‘āwiyah should not be considered a credible narrator of hadiths.

743 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal; also cited in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (Volume 2, p. 200).

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ . كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابٍ . فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ “إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ غَضَبِي” .

Glossary

Abbasids – second major dynasty in Muslim history, which came directly after the Umayyads. ‘Abbasid kings ruled from 132–656AH (750–1258CE) until their capital city of Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols. The dynasty regrouped in the Mamluk capital of Cairo in 659AH (1261CE) and continued to rule over a limited area of the original empire until 923AH (1517CE), when the Ottoman Sultanate gained ascendancy. At its peak, the empire extended from Persia to what is now Algeria in North Africa and northward into Asia Minor and Anatolia. Wrongly described as a *khilāfaḥ*, the dynasty was named after the Prophet’s (ﷺ) uncle, al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Jamā‘ah – *folks adhering to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah and identifying with the majority congregation of Muslims.* The term was coined and promulgated by King Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, who by its use, sought to confer legitimacy on his tribal usurpation and corruption of Islamic political power. Today, these are the Muslims, generally Sunnīs, who regard the Hadith, particularly the Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, to be an infallible representation of the Sunnah, and thereby at the same level of impeccability as the

Qur'an. Scholars in this "tradition," by placing unimpeachable "faith" in the full compilation of hadiths, despite contradictions with the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah in some instances, have come to rationalize tolerating the oppressive policies of unjust rulers.

ākhirah – *the end-life or afterlife*; this expression refers to the hereafter, or afterlife, or life after death. In a more refined sense, this word alludes to the time-period that will follow the Day of Resurrection and Judgement.

'ālam al-jabarūt – *the formless, or Angelic, world.*

'ālam al-malakūt – *the subtly material world.*

āmīn – *we consent to, approve of, and are committed to what was said.*

al-amīn – *the trustworthy, the trustee, or the fiduciary*; the commendation given to Muhammad (ﷺ) by his people before he received the commission of prophethood.

al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahī 'an al-munkar – *to demand and authorize what is self-evidently right and to deconstruct and decommission what is self-evidently obnoxious.*

aṣnām – *plural of ṣanam.*

awliyā' – *plural of walī.*

āyah – *illustration, miracle*; this could refer to Allah's (ﷻ) illustration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the generous Qur'an; it can also refer to Allah's (ﷻ) illustration of power and authority in the course of prophetic and social history (that is, an alteration of physical laws: miracles); and lastly, it could refer to Allah's (ﷻ) illustration of power as an act of creation. Plural for āyah is āyāt.

baḥīraḥ – a she-camel whose ear has been obviously cleaved, whose meat and milk was unlawful for women (in jāhiliyaḥ times), that has reproduced at least five times, and that is sequestered from being mounted for rides or loads.

Bakkah – another name for Makkah; cited in āyaḥ 3:95 of the Qur’an.

balāgh – communication, announcement, proclamation; often used to describe the mode of communication between the Prophets (ﷺ) and their peoples and societies.

Banū ‘Abd Manāf – one of the major branches of the Quraysh, whose founding member was ‘Abd Manāf al-Mughīraḥ ibn Quṣayy, the great-great-grandfather of Muhammad (ﷺ).

Banū Isrā’īl – the Children of Israel.

basmalah – a designation for the phrase *bi-ismi Allāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm*.

baṭāna – concealed.

bāṭil – falsehood, lies, misrepresentation, institutional corruption; the opposite of ḥaqq.

bay‘aḥ – allegiance.

baytullāh – the House of Allah; refers to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām.

Baytullāh al-Muḥarram – the Consecrated (or Restricted) House of Allah; refers to al-Masjid al-Ḥarām.

bid‘aḥ – a negative modification, a transposed variation; this term in Islamic *fiqhī* (jurisprudential) discourse, especially by those who consider themselves *salafīs*, refers to additions or subtractions from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah; especially additions. It has a derogatory

undertone when used by some *salafīs*. They cannot visualize a *bid'ah ḥasanah* (a positive modification) as a component of *ijtihād*.

dā'i – *a caller to Islam; an Islamic “missionary.”*

ḍalālah – *turpitude and perversion.*

Dār al-Arqam – The venue in which the first Muslims of Makkah secretly gathered to be instructed by the Prophet (ﷺ) about their new Islamic identity and to develop a strong bond among themselves. Located in a narrow street east of the hillock al-Ṣafā, it was the house of Arqam ibn Abī al-Arqam ibn Asad, one of the first Muslims, and it afforded the early Muslims suitable entry and exit without alerting “the street.”

da'wah – *call; contemporarily used, though not necessarily right, to mean missionary activity designed to convince non-Muslims of Allah's (ﷻ) message.*

dhabā'ih – *plural of dhabīḥah.*

dhabīḥah – *an edible animal that is slaughtered according to Islamic standards, teachings, and regulations.*

dīn – *ideological pattern and social prototype; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is religion. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word dīn should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a dīn could be man-made and in denial of Allah (ﷻ) or it may be in conformity with Allah (ﷻ) and in affirmation of Him.*

farraqū dīnahum – *they split up or broke apart their ideological pattern (dīn).*

farsh – smaller livestock incapable of and not suitable for loads and labor such as sheep and goats.

fath – literally, a breakthrough; liberation from oppression and injustice. Many Muslims, subjected as they are to the dominance of the orientalist lexicon and the history of seizure and subjugation behind it, confuse the word to mean conquest or conquer. Its plural is *futuḥāt*.

fiqh – practical knowledge, legal knowledge, jurisprudence; the moral and legal understanding and interpretation of Islamic norms and laws within a particular generation or set of circumstances.

fiqhī – of or pertaining to *fiqh*.

fisq – degeneration, decomposition, decay; moral depravity, sinfulness, corruption, profligate. This term describes the character of a human being who initially commits himself to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) but then later during the details of social struggle shows an elemental or visceral tendency to quit from the tasks and demands of such a struggle as it peaks. His failure is a failure of nerve and resolve at an *instinctual* level. A person demonstrating such behavior is called a *fāsiq*.

fiṭraḥ – man's God-given state of nature.

futuḥāt – plural of *fath*.

ghamarāt – deluges, floods, inundations; overwhelmed, overtaken, overpowered. It is the plural of *ghamraḥ*.

ghawl – a silent killer (from the jinn).

ghayb – unseen, unknown, metaphysical, incomprehensible.

ghusl – an Islamic bath; the intentional bathing of the Muslim body with pure water.

ḥabb – grain, seed, kernel.

ḥadīth – a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is *speech*.

al-Ḥadīth – the full body of ḥadīth literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).

ḥafazaḥ – preventive and custodial powers; in the Qur'an, one interpretation suggests that these are angels.

ḥāfiẓ – he who safeguards or preserves.

Ḥajj – the Pilgrimage; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa'daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm 'Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ — the day before 'Īd al-Aḍḥá.

ḥalāl – sanctioned, ritually fit; this word roughly corresponds to the word *kosher* in some of its biblical usage. The word extends over ritual and legal practices.

ḥamūlah – large-sized animals suitable for and capable of carrying loads and doing labor such as camels and oxen (cows).

Ḥanbalī – one of the four institutional Sunni Islamic schools of law (*madhhabs*), based on the teachings and rulings of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (164–241AH). Known for its uncritical acceptance of a wide range of ḥadīth literature, it thrives for the most part in the Arabian Peninsula.

ḥaqīqaḥ – factuality.

ḥaqq – truth, veracity, validity; right (as in civil, human, natural, and inalienable rights).

ḥarām – *taboo, unauthorized or unlawful; the opposite of ḥalāl.*

al-ḥashr – *the Gathering, the Assembly; refers to the Day of Resurrection or the Day of Judgement.*

ḥida'aḥ – *a noxious bird; may refer to a kite.*

hijrah – *the resolute act of forsaking a domain of oppression for a social order in which justice and fairness prevail as a byproduct of its people yielding to Allah's (ﷻ) command and counsel.*

Hijrah, the – *the forced departure of Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah; in a sense it was the Prophet (ﷺ) securing asylum from the Makkan mushriks and also his assumption of the role of leader, statesman, and ultimate decision maker — or imam — of the newly established Islamic State in Madinah.*

ḥikmah – *proportionate understanding (of things); wisdom.*

hudá – *guidance; in the Qur'anic paradigm it is the specific guidance that emerges from the Scripture and the Prophet (ﷺ).*

ḥukm – *a ruler's control, jurisdiction, power, dominion, command authority, and/or sovereignty over the ruled.*

ḥukūmah – *governance or government.*

Iblīs – *Lucifer; this word is generally used as a name of Satan before he broke with God and became the evil being that would bedevil Adam, Eve (ﷺ), and their descendants.*

ibtilā' – *trial through tribulation.*

'id – *feast day, celebration, holy day; usually used to refer to either 'Īd al-Fiṭr (the feast day after the month of Ramaḍān, the first day of*

Shawwāl) or ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā (the high, holy Days of Sacrifice after the Hajj, the 10th–12th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah).

ʿifrīt – one who is hyperactive (referring to the jinn).

ijtihād – a legal Islamic assessment or edict; this word infers a rigorous scholarly effort to reach an informed opinion based upon the Qurʾan and the Sunnah.

ilayhi – toward him (pronoun).

imam – leader; the word has both positive and negative usages in the Qurʾanic text.

īmān – secure commitment, covenant; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānaḥ* (trust) and *amn* (security).

īmānī – having to do with *īmān*.

Injīl – the Gospel; the original, unadulterated divine revelation to Jesus (ﷺ), which bears little resemblance to what survives today as the New Testament.

ins – human beings; the word means intelligent beings who are characterized by their psychosocial nature that fluctuates between acculturation and naturalness (or between assimilation and ignorance), peculiar to human senses and physical constitution.

inshāʾallāh – if Allah (ﷻ) wills, decrees, or wants.

iqāmah – raising up; erection, establishment; staging. In conjunction with the *ṣalāh* — *iqāmat al-ṣalāh* — it means *standardizing (and socializing) the ṣalāh*.

iqraʾ – Read! The word that commenced the revelation of the Qurʾan to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); it is the first word of the 96th chapter, *Sūrah al-ʿAlaq*.

irjā' – *deferring judgement*; refer to the explanation of the Murji'ah movement below.

Islam – *resignation/yielding*; this is a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) more than it is a *religion*. And it defines individuals and people who acquiesce and adhere to the will of Allah (ﷻ). Like other Qur'anic words, its specific meaning is refined within the context it is found in. Generally speaking, it may be understood to refer to the “civic character” or “civilian status” of people once there is a full and meaningful *taqwá-type* orderliness with associated rules.

isrā'iliyāt – *Jewish traditions* falsely (or opportunistically) attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) that have found their way into compendiums of Islamic hadith literature.

i'tizāl – *withdrawal, dissociation*; refer to the explanation of Mu'tazilah below.

jāhili – *pertaining to jāhiliyāh (ignocracy); ignocratic.*

jāhiliyāh – *an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance*; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.” It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah's (ﷻ) *dīn* is overrun by other systems and establishments.

jamā'ah – *aggregation/congregation*; in a more exacting sense, it is the quorum of Muslims needed for a particular task or obligation.

jihad – *the ultimate effort and sacrifice*; it is not *holy war*. The word has a spectrum of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

jinn – *unseen, intelligent beings*; this is an independent species of intelligent and advanced life that will be held accountable, like hu-

mans, on the Day of Judgement. Their composition is from the substance of the fire, whereas man's composition is from the substance of clay.

jinni – *of or pertaining to the jinn.*

Ka'bah – *a cubic structure, an object of veneration; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their ṭawāf (circumambulation).*

kāfir – *one who actively resists and refuses to comply with Allah (ﷻ); every person who enlists in kufr becomes a kāfir. Plurals are kāfirūn, kāfirīn, and kuffār; refer to the general definition of kufr below.*

kalimah – *word, phrase; in this volume, it refers to al-kalimah al-shahādah (article of faith or testimonial), that is, the statement: Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allāh, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu Allāh, which means "I bear witness [testify] that there is no deity/authority [worthy of conformity] except Allah, and I bear witness [testify] that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."*

khabā'ith – *toxins, pathogens; singular: khabīthah.*

khalifah – *successor; this word has its Qur'anic context. In this context man/humans are designated as Allah's (ﷻ) successors on earth. In post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.*

khalq – *creation. It represents the will of Allah for something to exist without the participation of humans or any other being(s). The act of creation is specific to Allah — only Allah (ﷻ) can create.*

khanāzīr – *pigs, hogs, swine; when the word is used for human beings, it may refer metaphorically to them acquiring the characteristics of pigs, such as filthiness and gluttony. The singular is khinzīr.*

kharaja – departed, exited.

Khārijī – singular for Khawārij.

Khawārij (Kharijites) – the Arabic term, which is in the plural (singular: Khārijī), indicates the dissidents, who, at the Battle of Ṣiffīn (37AH), refused arbitration between ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, and “departed” (*kharaja*). They facilitated, as it turned out, Mu‘āwiyah’s victory over Imam ‘Alī, and later that of the Abbasids over the Umayyads. To them is attributed the earliest of the schisms in Muslim history. From the point of view of the development of dogma, their importance lies particularly in the formulation of questions relative to the theory of the *khilāfah* and to justification by faith or by works. From the point of view of political history, they disturbed the peace of the Islamic society by means of continual insurrections, which often ended in the temporary conquest of entire provinces.

khazā’inu-allāh – the (unlimited) storehouses or treasures that are in the possession of Allah (ﷻ).

khilāfah – successorship; Caliphate.

kufr – denial of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power; this becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this antithetical hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun rasūl Allāh – There is no deity/authority (worthy of conformity) except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

al-ladhīna – those (in reference to people).

lahm ḥalāl – *meat that is ritually fit for human consumption.*

mā – *that or which* (referring to non-thinking animate beings or animate and inanimate objects).

Madinan – *having to do with Madinah*; usually refers to Qur’anic verses (*āyāt*) revealed in Madinah.

Makkan – *having to do with Makkah*; often refers to Qur’anic verses (*āyāt*) revealed in Makkah.

al-mala’ – *the elites, the aristocracy, the upper class*; in context, the term refers to the influential power clique of Quraysh.

Mālikī – one of the four institutional Sunnī Islamic schools of law (*madhhabs*), based on the teachings and rulings of Mālik ibn Anas (93–179AH). Today, it is dominant in North and West Africa.

al-manẓilah bayna al-manẓilatayn – in context, it refers to the Mu’tazilī doctrine of a *position midway between imān and kufr*.

marḥūmūn – *those who receive Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy*; plural of *marḥūm*.

al-Marwaḥ – a hillock in Makkah opposite the hillock al-Ṣafā, in the vicinity of the Well of Zamzam. During the Hajj and ‘Umrah, Muslims perform the ritual running (*sa’y*) between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwaḥ to commemorate Hājar’s frantic running back and forth seven times between these two hills to look for water and sustenance for her infant son Ismā‘īl (ﷺ) whose life was threatened because of thirst and hunger.

mas‘á – *the place (distance) where the sa’y between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwaḥ is performed.*

masjid – *the place or area of sujūd (prostration)*; a mosque.

al-Masjid al-Ḥarām – *the Restricted Sanctuary*; see also the Ḥaram and al-Bayt al-Ḥarām.

mathābah – *a place to which one regularly returns; retreat, refuge, security zone*. In context, it refers to the Holy Sanctuary (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām) in Makkah.

mikhlab – *claw of a carnivorous bird*.

millah – *constituency, or the people of a country, or a community of persons bound by a common heritage*; most of the time this word is used in the Qur'an to refer to the consolidating of the popular will around Abraham and his Prophetic descendants (ﷺ).

mu'adhdhin – *a person who calls (announces) the adhān*.

muballigh – *communicator, announcer, proclaimer*; the term often refers to prophets as they deliver divine guidance to their people, and those who continue to observe that divine mission in their footsteps.

mufassir – *exegetist*; one who explains the meanings of the Qur'an.

muhājir – *one who embarks on a hijrah*.

al-Muḥarram – *the first month of the Islamic hijrī calendar*; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

Mujbirah – *those who believe in predestination*.

mujtahid – *one who issues or is capable of issuing a legal Islamic assessment or edict*; refer to the definition of *ijtihād* above.

mu'min – *every person who is firmly and securely committed to Allah (ﷻ)*; a bearer of *īmān*. See *īmān* above.

munāfiq – a dual loyalist; those “Muslims” who are outwardly performing their part in a ritual Islam, but when it comes time to honor this Islam in its struggle and sacrifices, they show inclination toward the anti-Islamic camps, states, or powers around. They feign Islam, while in reality they owe their allegiance to the representatives of *kufr*. See *nifāq* below.

Murji’ah – name of a politico-religious movement in early Islam, derived from the Quranic usage of the verb that means to *defer judgement* (*irjā’*). In later times the name referred to all those who identified faith with belief, or confession of belief, to the exclusion of acts. They generally admitted that Allah (ﷻ) might either punish or forgive Muslim offenders. According to some, the punishment would be eternal; however, others affirmed that it would be temporary and that the offender would eventually enter Paradise through the intercession of the Prophet (ﷺ). The latter view agrees with predominant “Sunni” traditionalist doctrine.

Murji’ī – an adherent of the Murji’ah’s train of thought, or having to do with the Murji’ah.

murtadd – one who regresses into *jāhiliyah* after freely agreeing to yield to Allah’s (ﷻ) commandments. Contrary to the way the word is inappropriately translated into English by partisan orientalist who have tirelessly sought to misrepresent Islam, a *murtadd* is not an *apostate*, whose renunciation begins and ends with a strictly theological change of heart. A *murtadd* is one who seeks to politically, ideologically, and militarily abandon the unity of Islam in favor of whatever brand of *‘ashabiyyah* (exclusivist group solidarity) he belonged to before Islam. See also *riddah* below.

mushrik – an individual(s) and people(s) who actively and institutionally diminish the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and promote the authority of others. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah (ﷻ) as “one among many” deities and authorities. The feminine singular is *mushrikah*; feminine plural is *mushrikāt*.

Muslim – a man or woman who has acquiesced to the command and counsel of Allah (ﷻ), and the leadership of the final prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ); plural is *muslimūn*.

mustaqarrun wa-mustawda' – static and retaining; or stable and transferable.

mutawātir – following one after another; continuous, unbroken. In hadith literature, this refers to a hadith(s) that is reported by a significant number of narrators at each level in the chain of narration, thus reaching the succeeding generation through multiple chains of narration leading back to its source. This provides confirmation that the hadith is authentically attributed to its source at a level above reasonable doubt.

Mu'tazilah – from the Arabic word *ʾitazala*, meaning to remove oneself from, to bow out; a school of thought that was born out of, or inserted itself into, the controversies of the civil strife between Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib on the one hand and the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions, al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām and Ṭalḥaḥ ibn 'Ubaydillāh, and the absolutist, binary, and condemnatory views of the Khawārij (Kharijites) on the other hand. Faced with a conflict between opposing parties, none of whom could reasonably be considered absolutely reprehensible, the need arose for dogmatic nuances. Considered to be the progenitor of the rationalist movement in Islamic thought, the theological school was founded by Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' (81–130AH/700–748CE).

Mu'tazilī – an adherent of the Mu'tazilah's line of thinking, or having to do with the Mu'tazilah.

nāb – the long canine tooth of a carnivorous animal.

nafs – the bio-self.

Naṣārā – theological Christians or political Christians (defined by context).

nifāq – disloyalty, hypocrisy, feigning allegiance.

nūr – light, luminance.

qā'idah fiqhīyah – jurisprudential basis or rule.

qiradaḥ – apes, monkeys; when the word is used for human beings, it may refer metaphorically to them acquiring the characteristics of monkeys, such as imitation and mockery. The singular is *qird*.

qul – Say! In the Qur'an, the word commands the Prophet (ﷺ), and by extension the committed Muslims, to proclaim to his people.

qum – Stand up! In the Qur'an, the word commands the committed Muslims to rise up and take charge of their affairs, or to wrest their destiny from the authority of man to the authority of Allah (ﷻ).

Quraysh – literally, little shark; refer to **Endnote 250** in this volume and **Endnote 257** in Volume 7 for a brief history of the dominant power constituent of Makkah.

Qurayshī – having to do with the Quraysh.

raqīb – monitor, observer; overseer, guardian. In Islamic terminology, this may refer to an angel.

Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) – the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ); also called Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) or simply the Prophet (ﷺ). When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

ribā – usury; a particular type of nefarious and vicious financial transaction that generates money from lending money.

riddah – a regression into jāhiliyah after freely agreeing to yield to Allah's (ﷻ) commandments.

rijs – filth, dirty act.

risālah – written communication, letter, or message; scriptural substance delivered to humanity/community by a prophet from Allah (ﷺ).

rūh – vital essence, soulfulness.

ṣābi' – deserter.

al-ṣādiq – the truthful, the honest; another commendation given to Muhammad (ﷺ) by his people before he received the commission of prophethood.

al-Ṣafā – a hillock in Makkah opposite the hillock al-Marwaḥ, in the vicinity of the Well of Zamzam. See al-Marwaḥ above.

sā'ibah – a vagrant camel, dedicated (or assigned) to the idols, never to be worked, its hair not to be trimmed, and its milk only to be given to guests.

sajdah – prostration; plural: *sujūd*. This is one of the motions of *ṣalāh*, when a praying Muslim puts his forehead on the ground and glorifies the Almighty.

ṣalāh – expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah (ﷻ); Muslims should do this (at least) five times a day: *Fajr*, *Zuhr*, *'Aṣr*, *Maghrib*, and *'Ishā'*.

ṣālihūn – those who sincerely do good works for the cause of Allah (ﷻ), expecting no earthly gratification or reward; plural of *ṣālih*.

ṣanam – an object of veneration that has a human form, an idol; its plural is *aṣnām*. This is opposed to an object of veneration that does not have a sculpted (human) form, such as a rock or a tree, which in Arabic is a *wathan* (plural: *awthān*).

sa'y – *running, moving quickly*; the ceremony, during the Hajj or 'Umrah, of running seven times between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwah.

Shafi'i – one of the four institutional Sunnī Islamic schools of thought (*madhhabs*), based on the teachings and rulings of Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'i (150–204AH). Shāfi'i scholars are considerably more circumspect about hadith literature than their Ḥanbalī counterparts. The *madhhab* is prevalent in the Arab Muslim East, and in Indonesia and Malaysia.

shahādaḥ – *testimonial*; like other words, the variation in meaning depends on the context the word is used in. This word refers mostly to two concepts in Islamic literature. The first is the article of faith: *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu Allāh*, which means “I bear witness (testify) that there is no deity/authority (worthy of conformity) except Allah, and I bear witness (testify) that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The second concept related to the word *shahādaḥ* is *martyrdom*.

shahīd – *martyr*. The plural is *shuhadā'*.

sharī'aḥ – *legal course; more technically, the codes, procedures, and laws that take society in the direction of prosperity and survival*. The word originally meant — before the Qur'an was revealed — to take a path to a body of fresh water; now it generally refers to the body of Islamic law.

Shari'ah, the – *the Islamic legal system*.

sharīk – *sharer, co-partner, associate*; he who is engaged in *shirk* (see definition above). Its plural is *shurakā'*.

shayāṭīn – *devils, demons, evil spirits*.

Shī'i – *literally, a follower*; the intimate group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his family and his bloodline descendants. This was

a term coined by Mu‘āwiyah to single out and sideline the supporters of Imam ‘Alī as a cult of personality that had separated and deviated from the rest of the Ummah. The two main denominations are the Imāmīs (Ithna-‘Asharīs) and the Zaydīs.

shirk – the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority; in other words the displacement of allegiance in man’s heart and the dislocation of authority in man’s life. See also *mushrik* above.

shubuhāt – doubts, ambiguities.

shuhadā’ – plural of shahīd.

shurakā’ – sharers, co-partners, associates; those who are engaged in *shirk* (see definition above). Its singular is *sharik*.

ṣiddīqūn – those who remain true to their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) despite obvious challenges to the contrary; plural of *ṣiddīq*.

Sīrah – biography of the Prophet (ﷺ); this is an account of his lifetime, particularly its struggle aspect during his years of prophethood in Makkah and Madinah.

ṣirāṭ mustaqīm – straight span; this is in reference to man’s meaningful and directional journey to Allah (ﷻ) during his lifelong efforts and movements. It is a phrase used in every *ṣalāh* to focus a Muslim’s attention on the fact that he/she is pursuing a path that “leads to God.”

sunan – social laws. This is the word’s Qur’anic meaning in so far as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muḥaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the plural of *sunnah*.

Sunnah, the – *the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet (ﷺ); or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).*

Sunnī – *literally, one who adheres to the Sunnah; the core group around the Prophet (ﷺ) inclusive of his companions and their non-errant descendants. This is an abbreviated form of a term invented by Mu‘āwiyah — ahl al-sunnah wa-al-jamā‘ah — to give legitimacy to his usurpation and takeover by force of the highest office in the Islamic State.*

sūrah – *ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur’an; there are 114 sūrahs in the glorious Qur’an.*

tafsīr – *exegesis; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur’an.*

ṭāghūt – *concentration and abuse of excessive power; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyper-power” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.*

ṭāghūti – *adjective referring to ṭāghūt.*

tahrim – *prohibition.*

ṭaliq – *singular of ṭulaqā’.*

taqwá – *the feeling and thinking of Allah’s (ﷻ) immediate power presence in the affairs of man that makes a person avoid Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective interference in man’s individual and social life.*

tasmiyah – a designation for the phrase *bi-ismi Allāhi al-Raḥmāni al-Raḥīm*.

tayran abābil – *swarms of airborne creatures*; according to a contemporary Islamic interpretation by Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh, they are viruses.

thaqalayn – *the two heavies*; in the Qur’an, this refers to the two species of substance and consequence: man and jinn (p. 580).

tulaqā’ – *those who are amnestied, pardoned*; the term refers to members of the Quraysh in Makkah who had fought and undermined the Prophet (ﷺ) for most of the duration of his mission, but were amnestied after he finally liberated Makkah on the 20th of Ramaḍān in 8AH.

ulū al-‘aẓm min al-rusul – *the prophets of exceptional resolve and determination*; comprising this designation are Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsá (Moses), ‘Īsá (Jesus), and Muḥammad (ﷺ).

Umayyads – first dynasty in Muslim history, which usurped power after 30 years of al-Khilāfah al-Rāshidah. Inaugurated by Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān who initiated the pattern of hereditary rule over the Muslim Ummah, the dynasty’s despots ruled from 41–132AH (661–750CE) until they were overthrown by resistance movements consisting of the Khawārij and Imam ‘Alī’s descendents. Unfortunately, the progenitors of what would become the ‘Abbasid dynasty were waiting in the wings to fill the political vacuum created by the fall of the Umayyads. The ‘Abbasids moved the capital from Damascus to al-Kūfah and then to Baghdad.

Umm al-Qurá – *literally, the mother of all societies; the original social order*. It is a descriptive name of Makkah.

ummaḥ – *the consolidation of a collective will*.

Ummah, the Islamic – (uppercase reference is always to) the Islamic *ummaḥ* of Muhammad (ﷺ).

‘Umrah – the lesser Hajj; attending the Sacred Sanctuary in Makkah in a state of *iḥrām*, circling the Ka‘baḥ, and jogging between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwaḥ (no standing at ‘Arafāt is required).

wahy – revelation; inspiration.

wājib – duty, obligation.

walī – helper, ally, supporter, benefactor, sponsor; guardian, patron; plural is *awliyā’*.

wuḍū’ – ablution consisting of washing with water the hands, mouth, nose, arms, and face as well as wiping the hair and wiping or washing the feet.

Zabūr – the Psalms of David; the original, unadulterated divine revelation to Dāwūd (ﷺ), which does not survive today.

zahara – manifested, appeared, surfaced.

zakāḥ – freely paying money as an act of financial maturity; usually the word is translated as *almsgiving* or *charity*, which not at all renders correctly its original meaning. Many times in the divine Writ the word *zakāḥ* is preceded by *aqāma*, *yuqīmūna*..., which means that this giving of money has to be institutionalized or regulated.

zālim – one who does *zulm*; a tyrant, oppressor.

zālimūn (or **zālimīn**) – plural of *zālim*.

zulm – *injustice/oppression*; this is the practical result, in human societies, of deleting Allah (ﷻ) as the only Authority and only Power in life. Many times in the divine Writ Allah refers to *shirk* as

being a massive expression of *ẓulm*. For those who are confused about who the *mushriks* are, they only need to look at parts of the world where there is colossal injustice and identify the operators of that injustice.

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